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MEN OF THE WORLD, MID HUM AND STIR, RING OF ANVIL AND FRET OF LOOM,
BUILD FOR YOUR THOUGHTS A THOROUGHFARE, KEEP FOR YOUR SOULS A SILENT ROOM

THE POETRY REVIEW

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VOLUME XLV

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INDEX TO VOLUME XLV

TITLES

PAGE

Accidie. Peter Dunn - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 154
Age. John Smith - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 201
Ah, the South London Landscape. Paul Selver - - - - - - - - 137
All Is Vanity. A. E. Coppard - - - - - - - - - - - - 10
All My Senses. F. Pratt Green - - - - - - - - - - - 236
All Passion Spent. John Redwood Anderson - - - - - - - - 76
Ancient and Modern (Review). Geoffrey Johnson - - - - - - 44
Announcements and Notices - - - 48, 52, 53, 55, 96, 115, 116, 117, 119, 146, 149, 181, 235, 243, 254
Answer. Alexander Buist - - - - - - - - - - - - - 208
Artist. Alun Llewellyn - - - - - - - - - - - - - 18
Art Market, The. (Cartoon). Low - - - - - - - - - - - 6
Aspects of Unity (Review). Geoffrey Johnson - - - - - - - 44
At Luncheon on 8th May. Odette Tchernine - - - - - - - 183
Autograph Poem by Charles Dickens (Illustration) - - - - - - 71
Autumn Came to Paris. Godfrey Turton - - - - - - - - - 153
Autumn Leaves in the River. (Premium Poem). Mark Bourne - - - - 180

Ballad of the Mares. The. (Oriole Prize Poem). R. J. Portchmouth - - 112
Barbarians and Philistines (Editorial Prelude) - - - - - - - 195
Beauty and Age. Constance Grayston - - - - - - - - - 143

Cathedral of Milano. Marie Tello Phillips - - - - - - - - - 154
"*Cast My Delight*". Monica Pritchett - - - - - - - - - - 83
Celebration. Sonia Bentzon - - - - - - - - - - - - 27
Celtic Genius in Modern Poetry, The. Stuart Holroyd - - - - - 21
Centurion's Farewell, The. T. B. Rowan - - - - - - - - - 27
Cliffs of Lobos, The. Margaret L. Albanese - - - - - - - - 209
Cotswold Country, The. Thea Hunt - - - - - - - - - - 93
Counsels to a Young Poet. Herbert Palmer - - - - - - - - - 72
Creative Evolution. Eve Wilson - - - - - - - - - - - 218

"Dear Editors—" - - - - - - - - - - - 37, 97, 162, 230
Dedications:
John Redwood Anderson - - - - - - - - - - - - 195
Edmund Blunden - - - - - - - - - - - - - 67
Alfred Noyes - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 131
John Masefield - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 3
Dylan Thomas (Portrait Drawing), Michael Ayrton - - - - - - 135

Earth Still Fair, The. (Editorial Prelude) - - - - - - - - 131

INDEX TO VOLUME XLV

PAGE

Editorial Preludes:
Barbarians and Philistines - - - - - - - - - - - 195
Earth Still Fair, The - - - - - - - - - - - - - 131
Evergreen - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 3
Flowers for the Living - - - - - - - - - - - 67
Editorial Letter-Box (see "Dear Editors —")
Editorial Staff Short Reviews - - - - - - - 47, 107, 174, 240, 242
Elegy. Margaret Haley Carpenter - - - - - - - - - - 152
Escape From Traditionalism. Kennedy Williamson - - - - - 217
Eternal Adam, The. Rosa Waugh Hobhouse - - - - - - - - 158
Everest (Lord Alfred Douglas Sonnet Award). Joyce Evelegh - - - 50
Evergreen (Editorial Prelude) - - - - - - - - - - 3
Exodus. Ellen E. H. Collins - - - - - - - - - - - 91

False Gods. Robert McKinnon - - - - - - - - - - - 158
Flowers For the Living (Editorial Prelude) - - - - - - - - 67
For a Dead Infanta. John Bayliss - - - - - - - - - - 28
Friday Evenings at Portman Square - - - - - - 39, 109, 233
From Persia to Paradise (Review). Robert Armstrong - - - - - 243
Fruits of the Spirit (Review). Kathleen Valmai Richardson - - - 100
Futility in Cagnes. W. H. Petty - - - - - - - - - - - 206

Gamesters. Walter de la Mare - - - - - - - - - - - 7
George Barker: Deep or Drumlie? Vernon Scannell - - - - - 223
Going to Earth. G. D. Martineau - - - - - - - - - - 202
Grave of Chronos, The. Alun Llewellyn - - - - - - - - - 138
Green Fields (Review). E. D. Bangay - - - - - - - - - 102
Greenwood Prize Poem. *Milton Blind*. Margaret Rhodes (See Towards Parnassus) - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 244

Halcyon in the Ravens' Nest (Review). P. D. Cummins - - - - 104
Hazards (Premium Poem). Edith Roseveare - - - - - - - - 116
Helen. Elaine Weston - - - - - - - - - - - - - 106
Horsemen in the Park. Leslie Daiken - - - - - - - - - - 92

I Have Seen. Wrey Gardiner - - - - - - - - - - - 150
In Arden. Margaret Sheppard Fidler - - - - - - - - - 156
In Miniature. Michael Ivens - - - - - - - - - - - 140
Inner Room, The. Richard Church - - - - - - - - - - 8
In the Country. John Bayliss - - - - - - - - - - - 141
I Was Not There. Kennedy Williamson - - - - - - - - - 12

John Milton. Ian Crichton Smith - - - - - - - - - - 151

INDEX TO VOLUME XLV

PAGE

Kentaur's Teaching. The. Naomi Mitchison - - - - - - - - 200

Laurel Crown, The. Elizabeth Douglas - - - - - - - - - 159
Let Us Give Thanks (Review). John Graddon - - - - - - - 103
Like Doubting Thomas. Wrenne Jarman - - - - - - - - - 9
Lines For an Oak. Kathleen Valmai Richardson - - - - - - 11
Little Boy, A. Anthony Edkins - - - - - - - - - - - 227
Lord Alfred Douglas Sonnet Award, *Variations on a Theme.* Paul Selver.
Everest. Joyce Evelegh - - - - - - - - - - - - 49
Loss to Poland — and the World. Jack Lindsay - - - - - - - 147
Love Among the Ruins. Richard O'Donoghue - - - - - - - 88
Lovely, Growing Old (Review). Thomas Moult - - - - - - - 41
Lucky Dip (Review). Stephen Graham - - - - - - - - - 40

Marigold. P. E. Dunn - - - - - - - - - - - - - 32
Meditation by Starlight. Margaret Stanley-Wrench - - - - - - 207
Merseyside. Elsie M. Banister - - - - - - - - - - - 227
Milton Blind. Margaret Rhodes (Greenwood Prize Poem) - - - - 244
Moon. Dudley G. Davies - - - - - - - - - - - - - 88
Mother, The. Marie C. Stopes - - - - - - - - - - - - 214

Narcissus Revisited. Emanuel Litvinoff - - - - - - - - - 140
Nativity. Alan Barnsley - - - - - - - - - - - - - 87
New Orthodoxies, The (Review). Robert Armstrong - - - - - - 105
Night Journey. Michael Thomas - - - - - - - - - - - 150
Night Preludes in the Sun. E. B. W. Chappelow - - - - - - - 31
No Strange Land. Eve Wilson - - - - - - - - - - - - 219
Notched Beam, The. Margaret Stanley-Wrench - - - - - - - 85
Novel in Verse, *A* (Review). Stephen Graham - - - - - - - 167

Objective, Subjective (Review). Robert Armstrong - - - - - - 45
Of Edmund Blunden. E. D. Bangay - - - - - - - - - - 77
Offering, The. Andrew Keith - - - - - - - - - - - - 208
Oldest Inhabitant. Herbert Bluen - - - - - - - - - - - 16
Old Friends in Winter. Wilfred Thorley - - - - - - - - - 16
One Word. Darian Smith - - - - - - - - - - - - - 34
Oriole Prize Award. *Ballad of the Mares.* P. J. Portchmouth - - - 110
Our Guests. William Kean Seymour - - - - - - - - - - 184
Ov' e Beatrice. W. A. B. Gardener - - - - - - - - - - 77
Owl, The. E. B. W. Chappelow - - - - - - - - - - - 226

Poem That Influenced Me, The. (Symposium):
A. E. Coppard, Richard Church, J. Redwood Anderson, V. Sackville-West, Herbert Palmer - - - - - - - - - - - 13

PAGE

L. A. G. Strong, Phoebe Hesketh, Kenneth Hare, F. L. Lucas - - 94
Sir Herbert Read - - - - - - - - - - - - - 162

Poetry Above Politics. Yorke Crompton - - - - - - - - - 31
Poetry and About Poetry (Review). Stephen Graham - - - - - 234
Poetry "Down Under" (Review). F. Pratt Green - - - - - - 241
Poetry On Records (Review). John Graddon - - - - - - - 177
Poet In the Theatre. Stuart Holroyd - - - - - - - - - 211
Poets' Pleasure: News from the Centres - - - - - 57, 123, 187, 232
Poets' Progress (Annual General Meeting) - - - - - - - - 254
Portman Square:
End Papers - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 233
Happy New Year - - - - - - - - - - - - 121
Shade and Light - - - - - - - - - - - - 55
Spring Song - - - - - - - - - - - - - 182
Premium Reports and Awards - - - - - - - - 51, 115, 179, 248

Quiet Beauty. Wilfred Thorley - - - - - - - - - - - 157
Quiet Heart, The. (Review). John Graddon - - - - - - - - 173

Rascal Song. A. E. Coppard - - - - - - - - - - - 137
Reconciliation. Emanuel Litvinoff - - - - - - - - - - 203
Refrain. Odette Tchernine - - - - - - - - - - - - 20
Reunion. Teresa Hooley - - - - - - - - - - - - 144
Revelation. Ruth E. Thurley - - - - - - - - - - - 152
Reviews 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 99, 100, 102, 104, 105, 106, 107, 164, 167, 169, 171, 172, 173, 174, 177, 234, 236, 237, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243
Root and Flower (Review). Geoffrey Johnson - - - - - - - 106
Round the Globe (Review). Robert Armstrong - - - - - - - 169

Scot in Argentina, A. Patricio Gannon - - - - - - - - - 33
Scots Who Have (Review). Stephen Graham - - - - - - - 99
Secret Woods. Lady Margaret Sackville - - - - - - - - - 202
Serendipity Castle (Review). Kathleen Valmai Richardson - - - 43
Sheep. Phoebe Hesketh - - - - - - - - - - - - 29
Sleeping Beauty. A. V. Stuart - - - - - - - - - - - 220
Sleeping Heart, The. Robert Greacen - - - - - - - - - 199
Some Post-War Poets: An Appreciation. F. Pratt Green - - - - 79
Song of an Old Man. Danny Abse - - - - - - - - - - 86
Song of Eternity, The. W. Davis - - - - - - - - - - - 210
Spouting and Droning (Times Fourth Leader) - - - - - - - 35
St. Hilarion. Wrey Gardiner - - - - - - - - - - - 210
Street Scene. Barbara Bingley - - - - - - - - - - - 228
Strewn on the Wind (Review). Kathleen Valmai Richardson - - - 172

PAGE

Stunt, The (A Manuscript from a Bottle) - - - - - - - - 145
Surface and Centre (Review). Geoffrey Johnson - - - - - - - 239
Swans Returned, The. Harriet Plimpton - - - - - - - - - 155
Symposium: The Poem that Influenced Me - - - - - - 13, 94, 162

They had come from that Silent Ocean. Robert Armstrong - - - - - 216
They Made or Marred (Review). John Graddon - - - - - - - 240
They that Live for Ever. Stanton A. Coblentz - - - - - - - - 204
This is the Miracle. Stanley Mason - - - - - - - - - - 204
Three Emerging (Review). Kathleen Valmai Richardson - - - - 237
Three Poems: *Return; Calabrian Wine; Sicily and England.* Louis Golding - 74
To a Baby. Michael Thomas - - - - - - - - - - - 222
To a Girl Looking at a Painting. Michael Ivens - - - - - - - 78
To a Mother. John Lucas - - - - - - - - - - - - 80
To Anna, Remembering. Elaine Weston - - - - - - - - - 7
To a Venetian Lady. Michael Ivens - - - - - - - - - - 30
To a Violin. Maisie Radford - - - - - - - - - - - 28
To Venus (Lorenzo de' Medici). Kenneth Hare - - - - - - - 144
Towards Parnassus:
Greenwood Prize Award, 1953. Geoffrey Johnson - - - - 178
Lord Alfred Douglas Sonnet Award. Kennedy Williamson - - - 49
Oriole Prize Award. E. V. Knox - - - - - - - - - 110

Tryst. Carla Lanyon Lanyon - - - - - - - - - - - 30
Two Important Reprints (Review). E. D. Bangay - - - - - - 240
Two Poems: *Lost; Found.* Danny Abse - - - - - - - - - 142
Two Poems: *Bombay; Rupert Street Market.* John Bayliss - - - - 198
Two Poems: *The Swifts; In Praise of Darkness.* Phoebe Hesketh - - - 136
Two Voices from Overseas (Review). Geoffrey Johnson - - - - 178

Under Milk Wood: Yes and No (Review). Stephen Pike, Stuart Holroyd 164
Unison. Celia Randall (Premium Poem) - - - - - - - - - 51

Valley of Dry Bones. Frances Harland. (Premium Poem) - - - - 248
Variations on a Theme. Paul Selver (Lord Alfred Douglas Award) - - 50
Vilanelle of the Guignol. Margaret L. Albanese - - - - - - - 17

Warning, The. Herbert Bluen - - - - - - - - - - - 229
Watcher of the Skies. Stanton A. Coblentz - - - - - - - - 32
"Where's the Great Poet?" — - - - - - - - - - - - 70
White Horse, The. Rita Spurr - - - - - - - - - - - 205
Windermere Ferry. Edna M. Cass - - - - - - - - - - - 206

Yacht "Sea Swallow". Dorothy Una Ratcliffe - - - - - - - - 9
Zest and Abandon (Review). John Graddon - - - - - - - - 173

INDEX TO VOLUME XLV

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

PAGE

Abse, Danny - - - 86, 142
Albanese, Margaret L. - 17, 209
Anderson, J. Redwood - - 13, 76
Armstrong Robert - - 37, 45, 105, 115, 169, 171, 216, 243
Ayrton, Michael (Illustration) 135

Bangay, E. D. - - 46, 77, 102, 240
Banister, Elsie M. - - - 227
Barnsley, Alan - - - - 87
Bayliss, John - - 28, 141, 198
Bentzon, Sonia - - - - 27
Bingley, Barbara - - - 228
Bluen, Herbert - - - 16, 229
Bourne, Mark - - - - 180
Buist, Alexander - - - 208

Carpenter, M. H. - - - 152
Cass, Edna M. - - - - 206
Chappelow, E. B. W. - 31, 226
Church, Richard - - - 8, 13
Coblentz, Stanton A. - 32, 204
Collins, E. E. H. - - - 91
Coppard, A. E. - - 10, 13, 137
Crompton, Yorke - - - 36
Cummins, P. D. - - - 104

Daiken, Leslie - - - - 92
Davies, D. G. - - - - 88
Davis, W. - - - - - 210
De La Mare, Walter - - 7
Dickens Charles (Illustration) 71
Douglas, E. - - - - 159
Dunn, P. E. - - - - 32
Dunn, Peter - - - - 154

Edkins, Anthony - - - 227
Evelegh, Joyce - - - - 50

PAGE

Fidler, Sheppard - - - 156
Fox-Smith, C. (Tribute) - - 162

Gannon, Patricio - - - 33
Gardener, W. A. B. - - 77
Gardiner, Wrey - - 150, 210
Gibson, Wilfred - - - 198
Girvan, W. - - - - - 98
Golding, Louis - - - - 74
Graddon, John 84, 103, 173, 177, 240
Graham, Stephen - 40, 99, 167, 234
Greacen, Robert - - - 199
Greystan, Constance - - 143

Hare, Kenneth - 38, 95, 144, 162
Harland, Frances - - - 248
Hesketh, Phoebe - - 29, 94, 136
Hobhouse, Rosa Waugh - - 158
Holroyd, Stuart - 21, 164, 211
Hooley, Teresa - - - 144
Hunt, Thea - - - - 93

Ivens, Michael - - - 30, 78, 140

Jarman, Wrenne - - - 9
Jarvis, H. J. - - - - 98
Johnson, Geoffrey 44, 106, 169, 174, 178, 239

Keith, Andrew - - - - 208
Kenmare, D. - - - - 230
Knox, E. V. - - - - 110

Laird, Sir Patrick - - - 230
Lanyon, Carla L. - - - 30
Lindsay, Jack - - - - 147
Litvinoff, Emanuel - - 140, 203
Llewellyn, Alun - - 18, 138

INDEX TO VOLUME XLV

	PAGE
Lucas, F. L.	96
Lucas, John	86
Mason Stanley	204
Martineau, G. D.	202
McKinnon, R.	158
Mitchison, Naomi	200
Moult, Thomas	41, 51
O'Donoghue, R.	88
Palmer, Herbert	13, 72, 98, 163
Petty, W. H.	206
Phillips, Marie Tello	154
Pike, Stephen	164
Plimpton, Harriet	155
Portchmouth, R. J.	112
Pratt Green, F.	79, 179, 236, 241
Pritchett, Monica	83
Radford, Maisie	28
Randall, Celia	51
Ratcliffe, Dorothy Una	9
Read, Sir Herbert	162
Reader, A.	231
Rhodes, Margaret	244
Richardson, K. V.	11, 43, 100, 237, 172
Rivers, O.	230
Roseveare, Edith	116
Rowan, T. B.	27
Sackville, Lady Margaret	202
Sackville-West, V.	13
Scannell, Vernon	223
Selver, Paul	50, 137
Seymour, Wm. Kean	184
Smith, Darian	34
Smith, Ian C.	151
Smith, John	201
Smith, W.	231
Spurr, Rita	205
Stanley-Wrench, M.	85, 207
Stewart, L.	97
Stopes, Marie C.	214
Strong, L. A. G.	94
Stuart, A. V.	220
Tattersall, M. H.	230
Tchernine, Odette	20, 183
Thomas, Michael	150, 222
Thorley, Wilfred	16, 157, 162
Thurley, Ruth E.	152
Turton, Godfrey	153
Weston, Elaine	7, 106
Williamson, Kennedy	12, 49, 69, 217
Wilson, Eve	218, 219
Wilson, Harold	37

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Prelude — Evergreen	3
The Art Market, Cartoon by Low	6
Gamesters, Walter de la Mare	7
To Anna, Remembering, Elaine Weston	7
The Inner Room, Richard Church	8
Like Doubting Thomas, Wrenne Jarman	9
Yacht "Sea Swallow", Dorothy Una Ratcliffe	9
All is Vanity, A. E. Coppard	10
Lines for an Oak, Kathleen V. Richardson	11
I was not there, Kennedy Williamson	12
The Poem that Influenced Me, a Symposium by A. E. Coppard, Richard Church, John Redwood Anderson, V. Sackville-West, Herbert Palmer	13
Oldest Inhabitant, Herbert Bluen	16
Old Friends in Winter, Wilfrid Thorley	16
Villanelle of the Guignol, Margaret Lewis Albanese	17
Artist, Alun Llewellyn	18
Refrain, Odette Tchernine	20
The Celtic Genius in Modern Poetry, by Stuart Holroyd	21
The Centurion's Farewell, T. B. Rowan	27
Celebration, Sonia Bentzon	27
For a Dead Infanta, John Bayliss	28
To a Violin, Maisie Radford	28
Sheep, Phoebe Hesketh	29
Tryst, Carla Lanyon Lanyon	30
To a Venetian Lady, Michael Ivens	30
Night Preludes in the Sun, E. B. W. Chappelow	31
Watcher of the Skies, Stanton A. Coblentz	32
Marigold, P. E. Dunn	32
A Scot in Argentina, by Patricio Gannon	33
One Word, Darian Smith	34
Spouting and Droning	35
Poetry Above Politics, by Yorke Crompton	36
Editorial Letter-Box: Robert Armstrong, Harold Wilson, Kenneth Hare	37

Friday Evenings at Portman Square 39
Lucky Dip, by Stephen Graham 40
Lovely, Growing Old, by Thomas Moult 41
Serendipity Castle, by Kathleen V. Richardson 43
Aspects of Unity, by Geoffrey Johnson 44
Objective, Subjective, by Robert Armstrong 45
Mr. Chappelow and Others, by E. D. Bangay 46
New and Old Wine, by the Editorial Staff 47
Towards Parnassus: Lord Alfred Douglas Sonnet Award, by Kennedy Williamson 49
Variation on a Theme, by Paul Selver 50
Everest, Joyce Evelegh 50
Premium Competition Award 51
Unison, Celia Randall 51
Alice Hunt Bartlett Prize Anthology 52
Albert Ralph Korn Poetry Award 52
Lilian Bowes Lyon Poetry Award 53
Three Competitions 53
Portman Square — Shade and Light 55
Poet's Pleasure: News from the Centres 57

TO WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTORS

1. All MSS must have the name and the address of the author stated in the top left-hand corner of the first page. If he is a member of the Society a bracketed M should be added.
2. One side only of the paper must be used.
3. Reasonable margins and top space should be left.
4. A self-addressed envelope must always be enclosed either stamped or, if an overseas contributor, the Coupon-Response International. Otherwise, no MSS will be considered. Loose stamps cannot be regarded as a substitute. Except in rare instances an introductory letter is not necessary.
5. In their own interest writers should notice that poems over thirty lines in length have a very doubtful chance of acceptance.
6. If helpful editorial suggestions are made with a returned MS, please do not reply challenging the advice. Requests for criticism, moreover, are not invited. It should be remembered that The Poetry Society already has a well-organized service for expert advice, as announced in each issue.
7. Not more than four poems should be submitted at one time. Two is an ideal number.
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9. Acceptance or rejection of a MS cannot reasonably be expected until at least three months have elapsed. A decision may take longer. Inquiries by telephone cannot be dealt with.
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Next Issue—

LOUIS GOLDING AGAIN

and more Famous Poets on "The First Poem that Influenced Me"

These pages—An Offering to

JOHN MASEFIELD

"The days that make us happy make us wise"

Prelude . . .

EVERGREEN

The poet of the New Year — any new year — is still the great Victorian, Tennyson. "Ring out the old, ring in the new . . . Ring out the false, ring in the true." Nearly a century of poetry has followed *In Memoriam*, yet nothing by the moderns or near-moderns comes to the mind, even the popular mind, so readily as that noble invocation to the wild bells under the wild sky, happy bells across the snow. The Editorial Staff of *The Poetry Review*, wishing all members of The Poetry Society and all readers the old evergreen wish, are content to echo Tennyson's lines, especially those which express the hope — how fitting as 'fifty-three changes to 'fifty-four! — that along with the old year the mournful rhymes will go, making way for the fuller minstrel.

And turning to another old-timer who may outlast and indeed outmode these twentieth-century generations — George Meredith — we suggest that in the following lines is a good working principle for all who read poetry and for all poets, including those in their formative period:

I know not hope or fear,
I take what e'er may come:
I raise my head to aspects fair,
From foul I turn away.

Finally, a New Year message to those who make a habit of quoting John Milton's *Areopagitica* in defence of freedom in literature. It comes from the same essay and shows that the freedom he spoke about was not a freedom to write and publish anything, "fair or foul". "That which is impious or evil absolutely either against faith or manners, no law can possibly permit, that intends not to unlaw itself."

* * *

The cheeriest news of 1953 in poetry — the worst year in memory, it has been called, culturally and socially alike and tragically culminating in the death of Dylan Thomas — came in the shape of an announcement from Buckingham Palace that the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry, 1952, had been awarded to Andrew Young. Mr. Young is a Sussex clergyman, and his books of verse are *Speak to the Earth* and *The Green Man*.

And is it not appropriate that the Poet Laureate, John Masefield, who

is a leading adviser, should be offered by us *The Poetry Review's* tribute to him as a veteran poet of the English-speaking countries? Mr. Masefield, more than most, has devoted his life to his art. It has gained him the highest office, one that is surveyed historically in our next issue.

* * *

The dedication of this number to the Poet Laureate calls for no reason why, especially if the reader has lived long enough to remember how startled was the poetry world — and thrilled — by "The Everlasting Mercy" and the narrative-poems which succeeded it in the first years of John Masefield's prime, just before World War I. Few English-speaking poets of our time have had greater distinction.

So many readers have asked for the source of the quotation accompanying each "offering" that a pleasant little competition seems appropriate. The passage taken from Robert Frost's writings in the October-December issue, "Earth's the right place for love," will be found in his poem "Birches": and where in John Masefield's poems is the line quoted in our latest Dedication?

Readers' answers — on postcards only, addressed to "Dedication, *Poetry Review,* 33 Portman Square, London, W.1." — will be gathered together and checked by a completely detached and impeccable member of the Editorial Board when the last entry has arrived not later than January 30th, and The first three correct to be drawn on January 30th will each receive a set of six of the Poetry Society's Broadsheets — see our end-pages.

* * *

The customary survey in the periodicals at this season of the books of the year usually involves a choice among them of this or that as the best. The Editorial Board of this journal do not indulge their selective impulse in such a way, but if one of the eight is so enthusiastic that he demands space to announce *his* Book of 1953, we print him without committing the other seven of us. So here goes — in his own words:

"Without any hesitation whatsoever I declare the Book of the Year to be one which will surely become a classic. Perhaps surprisingly from our readers' point of view it is not a book of poetry, but prose: *Charles Dickens, His Tragedy and Triumph,* by Edgar Johnson, in two volumes (£3 10s.). Victor Gollancz is the publisher.

* * *

"The author of *Charles Dickens, His Tragedy and Triumph,* is an American professor, whose frank and courageous approval of Dickens's social and political extremism has somehow escaped a certain committee across the Atlantic — they obviously have no time or use for books. Readers of this critical biography may react to it with a frown for Professor Johnson, but they will be bound to accept Dickens for evermore, whether they like his novels or not, as the greatest humanist in all literature."

Now if, after that, anybody should ask for Dickens's credentials in poetry the answer is given in an anecdote about a most worthy Governor of Genoa, surely immortalized by Professor Johnson. During a holiday in Italy, Dickens was disturbed to hear that he was expected to attend a levee, and he asked the English Consul to explain and apologize for him.

"Where's the great poet?" asked the Governor, "I want to see the great poet." "The great poet, your excellency," said the Consul, "is at work, writing a book, and begged me to make his excuses." "Excuses!" said the Governor, "I wouldn't interfere with such an occupation for all the world."

* * *

A Robert Burns enthusiast whose letter, too late for this number, recommends laughter and ridicule as the only fitting response to many of the "pompous and would-be authoritative" pronouncements on poetry and the other arts that may impinge on it. On the page which follows these editorial notes the greatest cartoonist of our time, David Low — or just "Low", as he prefers — is to be found wholeheartedly agreeing with all laughers, mockers, and ridiculers of pomposity and infallibility in contemporary affairs. Ridicule is his weapon in "The Art Market", which he has generously permitted us to reproduce by arrangement with *The Manchester Guardian*, where it appeared a few weeks ago.

So potent is his use of the weapon that was chosen by Swift and Dickens that we need hardly explain the cartoon, except to say that it is directed against the blind adulation of the established.

In Low's cartoon we find such an authority as Sir Gerald Kelly so much in the background that he is reported to have said: "A little bird has told me that the British nation is contemplating paying £30,000 for a Cezanne." What is true of painting is often equally true of poetry, and by the exercise of a little imagination readers can understand why the cartoon appears in *The Poetry Review*, and also why our mention of the Annual Report for 1952–53 — the eighth year — of the Arts Council of Great Britain is restricted to figures: Opera and Ballet, grants and guarantees, £347,275; Music, grants and guarantees, £73,236; Drama, ditto, £63,273; Art, ditto, £4,052; Poetry grants, £648, (Repeat — Poetry grants £648.)

* * *

Postscript. — All readers, members, and friends of poetry are urged to contribute to the Mayor of Swansea's Fund in memory of the late Dylan Thomas. The proceeds will be devoted to the education of his children. Please send quickly to this office, where a branch of the fund has been opened by the Poetry Society for the next few weeks.

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

By kind permission of David Low Esq.

THE ART MARKET

[*Reprinted from* The Manchester Guardian

GAMESTERS

WALTER DE LA MARE

Three devils sate there, gloating on my sins,
In the dense music of thought's violins,
The whining, twining, pining violins.

Lean shone the tapers on them, chin and eye.
They diced and chaffered while the dark
flowed by;
Hour after hour the dark and stars flowed by.

They saw me not. From that cold mask no sign,
No signal shook from this lone soul of mine;
Blind were their presences to hint of mine.

Rejoiced I was to leave them fingering there;
The short swift record of my earthly care,
Life's hapless evil its insistent care.

And like a child, who plucks a flower that
blows —
Moon-cupped convolvulus or the clear briar
rose —
And happy, in beauty, for a moment goes,

So I, in mercy, freed them from all my sins,
Heard lapse the whining of the violins;
Heard silence lighten round the violins.

TO ANNA, REMEMBERING

ELAINE WESTON

Death in your face, my slender, dancing love,
So grave, so fleet,
Swirling your spun-glass skirt above
Bare, flashing feet.

THE INNER ROOM

RICHARD CHURCH

We should have pity for the man
Who spends his life in the anteroom
Waiting on patrons, or a worldly woman,
Obsequious for his career,
Bringing ill-afforded flowers,
Master of the genuflexion,
The nicely calculated bow,
The hands to touch, the lips to seek.

There are so many of his kind,
Half-starved, their humble courtship scorned.
There they wait, with the nine muses
Giving them a kindly glance
More killing than an open insult.
And hungry men, forced to be meek,
Only half-enflamed with passion,
Merit pity, though they turn
With feline gesture, to assuage
Their life-frustration on each other,
Making the anteroom at last
A tiny counterfeit of hell.

But he who wins to the further door,
Cheats the flunkey, forces the lock,
Has by then been teased and stung
So thoroughly, that he arrives
Angry, bleeding, and inclined
To doubt if what he sees within
Be a master worthy of trust,
Or the entreaty from the bed
Nothing but a strumpet-cry.

Having so lost charity,
Would he not be better served
To seek the anteroom again,
Shake the failure by the hand,
And learn to love a small madonna?

LIKE DOUBTING THOMAS

WRENNE JARMAN

Like Doubting Thomas, "Lord," I cried,
"Show me Your wounded limbs and side?"
But no one answers as I stand
With five red roses in my hand.

Another day, I prayed aloud
To glimpse His creased and bloodied shroud.
But nothing happens where I go
Upon the sunset-crimsoned snow.

And yet again — "Sweet Christ, one word
In tones those malefactors heard"
But no voice stirs the quiet street
Save the blind beggar's at my feet.

YACHT "SEA-SWALLOW"

(for Wilfrid Gibson)

DOROTHY UNA RATCLIFFE

Bonnie white yawl, when sea-birds are crying,
My heart's aboard you. Is your flag flying?
Are you still voyaging, or are your sails furled,
You, who were fashioned to sail round the world?

North, on a course, O lovely white wings
To viks that were raided by the sea-kings;
South to the isles where Olympian snows
Tower above bays where the olive tree grows.

East thro' the Suez to valleys of spices,
On to the countries where the sun rises,
West to a landfall, Columbus once hailed,
Oceans where Frobisher, Drake and Cook sailed.

Ship of my heart! head up for the Seven
Seas of the world to a harbour in Heaven,
Then, God of sailors, grant me this prayer,
To take my trick once where all winds are fair.

ALL IS VANITY

A. E. COPPARD

Old Hodge had worn to age
  In honest labours,
Contented with a cat
  And twenty neighbours

Who daily passed him by,
  They scarcely knew him
Save by a friendly nod
  They sometimes threw him.

Year in year out he hoed
  And ploughed and harrowed;
The church bell tolled, and cracked;
  The old sow farrowed.

Unheeded as a tuft
  Of roadside stubble
Hodge hoed, and dearth of coin
  Was his main trouble.

Uncavilling he lived,
  No scratch-head swayed him,
The wherefore and the why
  Being His who made him.

Made, too, the friendly cat
  And, in delirium,
The dodo and the louse,
  The megatherium,

Even as Hodge; poor soul
  Untruly human,
Who envied no man's lot
  And wed no woman,

But danced a mortal span
  Sans pipe and tabor,
And died upon the cross
  Of endless labour.

Unchained now Hodge may view,
  Past all that sunders
Earth from his hill of heaven,
  The signs, the wonders,

The Iliad of our world —
  Majestic tussle
For Tom-o'Bedlam's hat,
    Jane Austen's bustle!

LINES FOR AN OAK

On the occasion of the Award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to Sir Winston Churchill in his eightieth year

KATHLEEN VALMAI RICHARDSON

What shall we bring you? Autumn sunshine?
You, who roared back at the racking weather?
Garlands and epodes? For you, whose steel sinew
Held — and still holds — root and rock together?

How shall we praise you? You who have master-words
Nobler than ours; braver, truer;
Our songs of glorious deeds are but echoes
From stars you set ringing alone, unbowed Doer.

We learned to follow you, serving England;
Holding your words in our hearts, though their spears
Scarred the foetus unborn with the wounds of to-morrow
And honour we brought forth of sweat and tears.

Here stand the women you guided to harbour,
The widows of war; the mothers of hope;
Here stand the sons who will keep fast the moorings
If staunch be the strands spun and stout be the rope:

If faith be our gift; proud faith, stronger for giving,
Old fallows shall fruit in a world wider yet
And beyond our brief autumns, the great oak rekindle
That sons of our sons may not fail nor forget.

I WAS NOT THERE

KENNEDY WILLIAMSON

I was not there at Bethlehem
When first came Jesus to the earth,
Nor had I part or lot with them
Who should have worshipped at His birth;
But have my selfishness and sin
Made of my life a crowded inn?

I was not there at Nazareth
When He brought tidings of good cheer
And did but vainly spend His breath
On men who saw in Him no seer;
But does His Gospel sometimes find
My ears as deaf, my eyes as blind?

I was not in Gethsemane
When Jesus prayed for strength and grace
Nor were the sad words said to me
"Couldst thou not watch so brief a space?"
But are there times when He has need
As great, and I a broken reed?

I was not there at Calvary
When soldiers put my Lord to death,
Or wagged my head in ribaldry
As slowly ebbed his painful breath;
But have I never failed my trust
Or trailed His glory in the dust?

I was not on Emmaus Road
When He, the Risen Lord, drew near,
Or failed to see His grace bestowed
To lift His friends' despair and fear;
But has He never walked with me,
My holden eyes too gross to see?

Lord Jesus, use me now and here
Deep in Thy service, as Thou wilt.
My strength renewed, my vision clear,
Strike off the shackles of my guilt.
Bless me in thought and act and speech;
Keep me within Thy whisper-reach.

THE POEM THAT INFLUENCED ME

A SYMPOSIUM

John Masefield and Walter de la Mare, V. Sackville-West and Herbert Palmer, Richard Church, A. E. Coppard and John Redwood Anderson — how did these poets of name and fame begin writing poetry, what poem in their reading first impelled them to write?

No other revelation of the poetic mind can be more fascinating, or, for the new generation, as helpful a privilege. And here are autobiographical fragments, specially contributed in response to the invitation of *The Poetry Review*, that make an important symposium.

It is not always possible for a poet to recall that earliest inspiration. The Poet Laureate, for example: in his message of regret he can only say that "I made up many verses at a very early age." Another distinguished poet "cannot possibly say what particular poem first set me scribbling. As likely as not it was the first chapter of Genesis, which I so much prefer to other accounts of the same astonishing event." By contrast, "no poem ever made me write poetry," declares one not-so-modest, who "was inspired to write poetry because I am a poet." But contributions from most of the poets follow, and we hope to continue the Symposium in our next number.

A. E. COPPARD

Sixty years ago I stood one night under the awning outside a second-hand bookshop to shelter from the sleet and rain. There was a box of discards, the penny box, and I rummaged in it. I don't know that I was looking for anything but amongst a bunch of Stead's Penny Poets I came across some verses by a chap named Keats about a knight bewitched by a fairy, and was myself struck as it were by lightning.

Not really by lightning, and not really struck, but enthralled in a mad new way by strange wild caresses. Cold and wet the night, "ah, bitter chill it was", and so gusty that the yard-long row of tiny gas jets raged in grand fury against the squalls that could never quite extinguish the whole row, they always managed to rekindle themselves to flutter and gurgle in busy derision; but no matter for that, "La belle dame sans merci" had me in thrall, then and forever.

RICHARD CHURCH

I recall vividly that when I was a boy of fifteen, I opened a volume of John Keats one day, and started to read "I stood tiptoe upon a little hill". The result was one of those weird moments of transfiguration. I recall flushing deeply, curtains of blood passing over my eyes, and a giddiness taking me that shook my whole being. I devoured the poem, half-crying as though some awful catastrophe had overtaken me. And

I've never been the same man since! How odd to recall this incident, and to realise the defects of the instrument, Keats's clumsy, immature verse; yet magic enough to determine the course of my life, as probably it has determined that of other writers. For there is no doubting the fact that from the day I read it, I had no hesitancy over my career. I chose my way of life in that blood-suffused moment, and have kept to it.

JOHN REDWOOD ANDERSON

I have no hesitation in saying that the first poem that seriously turned my attention to poetry, and aroused in me the earliest tentative desire to write it, was "Paradise Lost"; and it is undoubtedly to the influence of Milton, with his masters, Vergil and Dante, and — much later — to that of his great disciple, Wordsworth, that my largest debt is due.

I first read "Paradise Lost" when I was fifteen years of age. Shortly after, I was given an old Chandos Classics edition of Shelley, and fell immediately under his all too pervasive spell. At this time I knew nothing of the principles of English metre — a subject that has long been one of my main preoccupations — but from a diligent study of Milton and Shelley I acquired a considerable practical knowledge of the Art of Verse.

It was not, however, until I was seventeen years of age that I had the immensely good fortune to meet and to become the intimate friend of Émile Verhaeren, and it was his work, as well as his personal encouragement, that turned my growing desire to write poetry into the fixed resolve to do so, and started me off on the long road I have followed ever since. It is to him — and, later, to Walt Whitman, to whose work he introduced me — rather than to any other writer, poet or philosopher, that I owe my subsequent "attitude to life".

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

I am afraid I shall have to return a most unsatisfactory reply for your symposium about what poem influenced me, for I cannot honestly say, as most people claim for themselves, that Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Keats or Shelley, influenced me at an early age. I was brought up in a very unintellectual home where poetry played no part, an English country house of the Edwardian era where golf and shooting and tennis seemed far more important than literature.

Nevertheless I scribbled little verses from the age of seven or eight upwards, but the first real influences that came into my life were the dramatic plays of Schiller and Victor Hugo and, above all, Rostand — *Cyrano de Bergerac*. All these had been introduced to me by various foreign governesses in my schoolroom curriculum and I had to sort them out for myself with little help.

Later on I made a friend, Patrick Shaw Stewart, who really woke me up to what poetry might mean. He made me read *The Shropshire Lad* and

Homer. These were a revelation, and just show how deep was my ignorance of poetry even at the age of seventeen or eighteen.

HERBERT PALMER

In my own retrospections it is not easy to fix on the first poem which really set the kettle boiling. My governess made me learn dozens of shapely lyrics by heart, and, from the age of nine, certain admirations produced scribbled derivations. I remember that my first effort was about a wolf and a shepherd, one phrase "great grey wolf" remaining in my head until this day, from which springs to mind William Robert Spencer's moving but starchy ballad "Beth Gelert", which must have been its begetter. But a little later a volume of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, discovered in my father's library, resulted in some slipshod blank verse — or, more probably, free verse that would shock even the moderns.

Some verses which have survived in manuscript, written about the age of sixteen, show the influence of Byron and Scott; but my pulses were first set truly stirring by Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale", discovered about the age of eighteen. The best of the rest of Keats followed, and at the same time Edmund Spenser's "Faërie Queene", while Swinburne, among contemporaries, provided the highest I aspired to read in the way of raging melody and passion. A number of uncollected and most unsatisfactory verses published in the *Leeds Mercury Supplement* (often over the pseudonym "Roland") help to prove that my memory is not at fault. All that was in the late nineties; but it was to the anonymous Ancient Border Ballad, completely discovered between the ages of thirty and thirty-four (years 1910–14) that I owed Song's most formative influence. Sprung Rhythm in those days was called Rolling Stress or Shifting Stress, and through the medium of the anonymous Border Ballad it began to affect technically nearly all the verse I wrote henceforth.

During the 1914–1918 War came the poetry of William Blake. With him I have been the most frequently compared. But what a long way I have stepped from W. R. Spencer's:

> Nor scath had he, nor harm, nor dread,
> But the same couch beneath
> Lay a gaunt wolf, all torn and dead,
> Tremendous still in death.
>
> Ah, what way then Llewelyn's pain!
> For now the truth was clear;
> His gallant hound the wolf had slain
> To save Llewelyn's heir.

Blake and Spencer are at almost opposite poles.

OLDEST INHABITANT

HERBERT BLUEN

He sits outside the village inn,
And puffs his pipe of clay,
He does not seem to heed the din
Of cars that pass all day.

He loves to sip his mug of ale,
And gossip with a crone,
And he can tell you many a tale
In confidential tone.

He's like some gnarled and ancient tree
Whose roots are sure and deep,
And soon he'll fall contentedly
Into a timeless sleep.

OLD FRIENDS IN WINTER

WILFRID THORLEY

When twigs are bare of leafage
  And tap upon the pane,
    Sigh "Summer's gone
    And left us lone
  But she will come again."
When life is bare of friendship
  And roads are hard with rime.
    Sigh "Winter's fell
    But we are well,
  Remembering old time."

For we have had our Summer
  And friendship, you and I,
    Though there be few
    Among the new
  As dear as those gone by.
For we have reaped our harvest
  And we have stored our grain.
    So sigh "Good hap
    Befall the sap
  Within our souls again!"

Aye, we through all our being
  Have known Life is not ill;
    Beyond our sense
    Omnipotence
  Hath shapen us with skill.
And though the years before us
  Be fewer than behind,
    We'll sigh, we twain,
    And bring again
  Dead summers into mind.

VILLANELLE OF THE GUIGNOL

MARGARET LEWIS ALBANESE

The little men who weep and sing
Upon this stage at hand's behest
Become a rare and human thing.

When vice is slain by the dragon king,
In virtue's velvet they go dressed,
The little men who weep and sing.

To a thimble world, these puppets bring
The humble men, and rags and jest
Become a rare and human thing.

For gifts of the imagining,
Children and white-haired dames have blessed
The little men who weep and sing.

Man's ancient ways, since time took wing
They tell, and doubt and faith professed
Become a rare and human thing.

How wood and clay, astonishing,
Grown warm, and in their charted quest
The little men who weep and sing
Become a rare and human thing.

ARTIST

ALUN LLEWELLYN

What's beauty? Let me find before I tell:
paper and pigment here, and memory
of things casual yet convening from some cause
that's hidden. Let me trace them, catching in lines
fixed to such permanence as my hand can give
to that immortal instant, the sudden light
of vision.

Have you seen in the quiet flow
of water, suddenly, the finger-trace
of secret power making its patterning
in whorl and whirl of the woven current, visible?
Or in the waver of leaf, the woodland dance
of winds, have you watched the chorus of music played
not for man's ear but made plain to his eye alone
in a marshalled motion by some strength compelled
that masters air and like an instrument
instructs the forest limbs to give resonance
to their own inward impulse, their straining sap
lifting its energy towards the sun and weighing
its power in balance against earth's magnet-hold?
Look; here's a stone, a pebble of the beach
handled by sea. Mark now the rhythm of line
uncovered from its heart, the moulded web
grain of its texture, drawn in assymmetry,
fired into permanence like the potter's clay,
polished and smoothed then like the diamond's light
cut to its core of hidden harmony.
Is this design? I here who witness it
acknowledge and yet disavow my faith.

Water and wind — what moves them, what contrives
their wedded currents, the seen and the unseen line?
What marks their limits; or indeed are they one,
the dew and the air that drinks it, wind that blows
over vast waters, and the ocean depth
that breathes a captured air? What is the rock
whose rhyme of grain is patterned like the tree's,
and what the flower? Is not the myriad moss
sprung from the stone, somehow, the thawed blossoming
of the frozen pulse its iron heart contains?

The delicate fragility of petalling
hued with the light, tender to touch of sun,
drinking life from the dew — is this not rooted
deeper than basalt or the granite layer
in subterrene tides of molten incandescence
washing the world's inner walls?
Beauty, you ask.
Lift your arm; let me see how the long drapery
fold upon fold catching the light and shade
traces lines, clear as the field of force
the lodestone follows, which your own motion draws
against the terrestial rhythm and the resistant
summons of earth's attraction . . .
This let me study,
the intricate mesh of force with force, the material
harmony woven with the invisible warp
that threads all being, all motion. Let others shape
the perfect feature, the body's supple proportion
and think it enough. But let me look beyond
the prism's range into the undiscovered
spectrum — beyond the violet or the red,
beyond man's sight or touch or the servant senses
suiting his body's need — into that region
of balanced, infinite discipline whose chord
sounds on a wave stronger than ear can hear
and holds the elements trembling to its tune;
the note divinely pitched that, were it heard,
would shatter the bubble of this universe
and take the soul to spaces beyond space.

This earns no cash? No. Then I'll draw your face
and give it — what? An excellent mask to measure,
a due and diligent preciseness? No, not that.
But I will make the lip move, studying
the shifting shadows, the unresting alchemy
of light dissolved in darkness. I'll make the eye
brilliant with the minuscular alternation
of muscle and mood, the fine and tremulous
adjustment of the body's swift awareness
with the spirit's apprehension, subtle as lightning.
I'll find within the compass of that body,
in the turn of head, the fingers' instinctive folding,
the shoulder's settlement and the sweep of dress,

the rhythm which moulds flesh and the soul's own motion
into the ceaseless pulse which is creation,
which is infinity and man and god and death . . .

What's beauty? I must die if I would know.

REFRAIN

ODETTE TCHERNINE

In the casket of earth, the composition
Waits for the germ of the jewel to stir.
In turn, the jewel, like a shield,
Is armour for the heart of the fire,
And the fire is burning, burning, turning;
It is the universal heart,
Live core of man, and bird, and beast.

The galaxies beyond your stars
Are forming and dissolving still.

It happened once, it happens now,
So it will happen aeons more.
The flames are whirling in all space,
They cooled, and cool, to fluid gas
And mists of rain, and slowing down
To deepest seas and green, and land,
Preparing for the stirring germ
Of myriad life in each dark mass.

All life is one, vine intertwined,
Each time life dies, it lives again.
The blackbird's song is part of you,
The nightingale throbs out your pain,
And every keen, vibrating thought
Rings of long centuries' refrain.

Rarely does cycle augur end
When the vast mother, Space, is near
For evolution's changing form
In tongues to speak, and ears to hear.

THE CELTIC GENIUS IN MODERN POETRY

By STUART HOLROYD

The contributions made by Celtic writers to our literature have been numerous and important. But never have they been so important as they are to-day. The poet who was born in Ireland or certain parts of Wales and Scotland has a distinct advantage over the English poet: he has inherited a tradition which has more to offer to the modern world than had the tradition which the contemporary English poet has chosen to reject.

It is popularly supposed that the great period of Celtic civilization left no more significant impression on the cultural mind of Western Europe than those stupid circles of druidic stones leave upon the mind of the American sightseer visiting Stonehenge. The reason for this is probably that the Celts, being a nomadic people, did not take the trouble to build towns. Thousands of tribes wandered over the hills and valleys of Europe, but they had neither a pyramid nor a Parthenon among them. To judge by modern standards a race that can build cities and roads as the Romans did are more worthy of respect than a race who litter the countryside with a lot of perplexing and ugly circles of stones. But the Celt will remain immortal, not because of his architectural accomplishments, but by reason of his ebullient and untameable character which has coloured European life and literature for more than two thousand years.

Study the culture of any western country and you will invariably find that there is a substratum which is recognisably Celtic. In a country like France, which absorbed so much Latin influence, the strain is unmistakably present from Villon and Rabelais to Balzac and Zola. The lyrical effusions of the German poets are traceable to the same root. In America the manifestations of Celtic influence are so many and so diverse that a book could be devoted to them. But the last outposts of the Celtic races before the steadily expanding Roman Empire were in Ireland and the mountains of Wales and Scotland, and it is in the literature of these countries that we find the purest expression of the character of the Celt.

That character is a strange and often paradoxical amalgam. To attempt some analysis of it must be my task so that we may recognise it when we encounter it in modern poetry.

The sense of the supernatural, of the Other World, has occupied so paramount a place in the Celt's mind that he has always been reluctant to face the actual world. As Bernard Shaw points out in *John Bull's Other Island*, the Irishman lacks the capacity for getting things done.

This tendency has influenced his literature, for although he has persistently proved himself a great lyrist, he has not once attempted to produce an epic.

The Celt is a dreamer, but a dreamer by choice. His unwillingness to face the real world is accompanied by a shrewd understanding of it. He has no illusions except those which he willingly creates. He is the most unsentimental of men, though people are always being sentimental about him. The popular idea that he is "wildly romantic" is quite fallacious: the provenance of his romanticism is the same as that of the wit of Oscar Wilde; it is calculated and deliberate.

By nature he is a rebel, a lover of individual liberty, he respects no laws and is intolerant of petty-mindedness; he will enter into a dispute at any provocation and whether the weapons be fists, words or ideas, he will wield them with incomparable enthusiasm. He is a lover of life but at the same time there is a scholastic trait in his make-up which is probably derived from the monastic tradition.

The literary distinction of the Celt is largely due to his accomplishment as a singer. He is so close to nature and so sensitive to its music that he can re-create that music in his poetry. His blood responds to the terrible music of the surging ocean, to the wild song of the wind in high and desolate places, to the pounding music of a mountain stream.

But more important than all these are the three qualities by reason of which I am claiming that Celtic literature is more significant to-day than it ever has been. Those qualities are: imagination, mysticism and a sense of the past.

The fact that the Celt has a fertile imagination need not be emphasized: educated people are acquainted with the richness of his mythology, and the uneducated are aware of the fact that he pretends to believe in fairies.

Mysticism is another obvious characteristic. No great Celtic poet is ever completely comprehensible on the intellectual level. You feel his meaning in the blood-stream, he plays upon those fundamental chords of human emotion which, before words were invented, expressed themselves in the primitive religious rituals. Poetry was born of magic and it is in the poetry of the Celt that the magical quality most palpably remains.

We all know that if we pick up an old shell and put it to the human ear, it will, even though it is serving the ignoble function of an ash tray, share with us its dreams of the vast, restless, raging ocean which was its original home. The Celtic poet is like that, the experiences of distant and dusty centuries live again in his bones and become articulate again through his voice. The particular brand of mysticism peculiar to him is an apprehension of truth through this sense of the past. In his great poem *Under Ben Bulben* Yeats wrote:

Many times man lives and dies
Between his two eternities,
That of race and that of soul,
And ancient Ireland knew it all.

Later in the same poem he told Irish poets to "cast your mind on other days," for he realised that the racial conciousness of the Irish people was the most valuable contribution they could make to literature.

Before I go on to deal with the individual contemporary poets of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, I feel obliged to mention one fact which may appear to invalidate my whole argument. Namely, that the Celtic blood has been so constantly diluted throughout the centuries by Norman, Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian influence that the pure Celt is as rare to-day as the coelacanth. But this fact supports rather than refutes the argument, for it proves my contention that the poets are consciously endeavouring to perpetuate a tradition. This does not mean that any poet can, by choice, absorb into himself the Celtic traditions and thus become a Celtic poet. He must be born into a community where those traditions are still alive and are his natural inheritance: and he must spend his early years among a people who still retain their sense of wonder and whose way of life is still splendidly simple.

At the beginning of the century Yeats instigated the great literary revival in Ireland. He realised that the Ireland into which he was born was one of the few countries which had not undergone change and where the past was still alive in the minds and traditions of the people. He instructed J. M. Synge to seek the material for his drama in the ordinary lives of the simplest people. The latter wrote in his preface to *The Playboy of the Western World*: "In Ireland for a few years more, we have a popular imagination that is fiery, and magnificent, and tender; so that those who wish to write start with a chance that is not given to writers in places where the spring-time of the local life is forgotten, and the harvest is a memory only."

"For a few years more", he said . . . and now those few years seem to have passed, for the contemporary poets which Ireland has produced concern themselves more with English social problems than with their own glorious inheritence.

Louis MacNeice, for example, though he retains some of his native qualities — his energy, virtuosity, shrewdness and lack of squeamishness — never tires of pointing out the sordidness of life in modern society. But he rarely writes as well as he did in his poem "The Hebrides", where his sense of the past finds expression:

On those islands
There is echo of the leaping fish, the identical
Sound that cheered the chiefs at ease from slaughter;
There is echo of baying hounds of a lost breed
And echo of MacCrimmon's pipes lost in the cave.

There are many people who would find it difficult to believe that the poet who wrote that oft-quoted stanza beginning: "You who love England, who have an ear for her music" was an Irishman. Cecil Day Lewis cares nothing for ancient Ireland, but he has enriched English poetry by introducing into it two recognisably Celtic characteristics. The first of these is imagination. His gift for capturing a fleeting thought or emotion in words that quiver and sparkle and dazzle the imagination is only surpassed by Dylan Thomas — another Celt. But his genius for the lyric is equalled by very few contemporary poets. He has in his soul the music of many generations of great Celtic singers. He can weave a delicate rhythmic pattern which delights the ear and infuse into it a passionate intensity which moves the heart. The poem called "Hornpipe" is an excellent example of this. Here is the first stanza:

> "Now the peak of summer's past, the sky is overcast
> And the love we swore would last for an age seems deceit:
> Paler is the guelder since the day we first beheld her
> In blush beside the elder drifting sweet, drifting sweet."

The centre of great local poetic activity seems to have shifted in recent years from Ireland to Scotland. Scottish poets to-day, whether they write in Scots dialect or in English, bring to their work a great enthusiasm and vitality which, added to other inherited qualities, often stamp it with a mark of distinction.

The leader of the movement is C. M. Grieve who, writing under the pseudonym of Hugh MacDiarmid, has succeeded in freeing the Scots lyric from the post-Burnsian decadence into which it had declined. He banished the slovenly, imprecise sentiments of his predecessors and introduced into his poetry a sharpness and clarity of vision which are refreshing and invigorating after the jaded sentimentality of such nineteenth-century poets as James Hogg. He also introduced a much needed intellectual element into Scottish poetry.

It is not possible for me to deal here with all the contemporary Scottish poets whose talents command attention. It is, however, important that I should stress the fact that the result of this poetic activity in Scotland has not so much been the emergence of a great poet as the appearance of a series of great poems. If someone were to publish a carefully chosen selection of the best modern Scots lyrics the result would be an immortal monument to the surpassing grandeur of the Celtic genius. Those who have the leisure and inclination will win rich rewards from the volumes published by Maurice Lindsay, Ruthven Todd, Emanuel Litvinoff, J. F. Hendry, Sydney Goodsir Smith, George Bruce, Adam Drinan, the apocalyptic W. S. Graham and the cosmopolitan Douglas Young. They will surely then agree with Eric Linklater when he writes: "Scotland has poets again, and they are poets who put intellect in service to their passion, whose appetite is large, and their spirit high."

Standing apart from all "movements" and the changing poetic tendencies of our age is one poet whose stature, I am convinced, will still be acknowledged when all the dust has settled. His name is Edwin Muir. The sense of the past which, as I have said, is a sort of leit-motif of Celtic poetry, is nowhere so evident as in his work. Mr. Muir had the good fortune to spend his early years in the Orkney Islands where there still existed an established and traditional way of life. There he perceived "evidences of a past but strange life" which were to exert great influence upon his mature thought and poetry. Edwin Muir is the perfect example of the Celtic mystic who is aware, to use the words of T. S. Eliot, "not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence":

> "we, the latest born are still
> The first ones and the last,
> And in our little measures fill
> The oceanic past.

This is a straightforward statement of the central theme of his poetry. Bound up closely with his theme is another idea which is derived from the experiences of his earlier years. In the Orkney of his youth, he says, "there was no great distinction between the ordinary and the fabulous; the lives of living men turned into legend." He has become deeply engrossed in this important question of the real and the illusory. In "The Labyrinth" he tells how, as the result of a visionary experience, he resolved the problem:

> That was the real world; I have touched it once
> And now shall know it always. But the lie,
> The maze, the wild-wood waste of falsehood, roads
> That run and run and never reach an end,
> Embowered in error — I'd be prisoned there
> But that my soul has birdwings to fly free.

Possessing the vision of Blake and the capacity for passionate thinking of Donne, Edwin Muir is assuredly among the greatest of our poets.

And finally to Wales. When I mentioned his name earlier in this article, the news of the death of Dylan Thomas had not been announced. Had I his great imaginative gift in the use of language I would raise to his memory a monument which would live to see the crumbling of the pyramids, a monument wrought out of that pure passion which shares the immortality of life itself. Where is his mighty passion now? Dead? I don't believe it. Oh reader, pardon my rashness and accept my apologies. I know that as a critic I should remain calm, precise and unmoved. Would it be presumptuous of me to offer these humble pages as a tribute to one in whom the elemental music of Nature has sung its final, plangent lullaby?

The poetry of Dylan Thomas possesses that soaring imaginative quality which is almost mystical in that it cannot be apprehended intellectually. The same can be said of Vernon Watkins in whose work this ancient Celtic characteristic is powerfully present. In his dramatic "Ballad of the Mari Lwyd" and other poems he shows himself a worthy perpetuator of the bardic tradition of a race whose history is shrouded in the darkness of vanished ages but whose passionate song will remain eternally young.

At the beginning of this essay I wrote that the Celt is more important in English poetry to-day than he ever has been. The brief survey I have made of the current poetic activity in the Celtic countries must demonstrate the truth of this contention. But there are other, wider implications which are, as yet, only hinted at. I selected three particular qualities for special attention, calling them, for convenience, imagination, mysticism and a sense of the past. These qualities, I submit, have a special significance in the modern world.

It is an acknowledged fact in all necromantic circles ("poets admitted if accompanied by a wizard") that one drop poured from the bottle labelled *Imagination* will turn the bleakest, barrenest ocean into a raging blood-red torrent. Imagination is a great reviver of the spirit in this scientific age, especially when it is derived from the perennially fresh inspiration of a people who learnt to sing four thousand years ago and have never since lost the art.

The vision of these people is also needed by a world which blunders blindly towards chaos. When it is too late we will realise that the problems of society are neither political nor economic, but are the spiritual problems of every individual. The seer and the mystic are more important to us than the politician.

One of the characteristics of the poetry written during this century is a frantic, almost pathetic struggle for originality. Many talented poets have set out in frail boats on vast, uncharted oceans and have sailed on and on, seeking an anchorage, until they sailed far beyond the last horizon. The Celtic poet, however, because of that sense of the past which is ever present within him, has deep and definite roots. He erects his thought-palaces or faery castles, not on the shifting sands, but on the solid rock-foundations of centuries.

INVITATION

Will anyone able and willing to start a Centre in any part of the country please communicate with the Secretary, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S CRITICAL SERVICE

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing the continuance of its Critical Service for Members. Two poems only may be submitted for criticism, for a minumum fee of 5s.

The charge for the criticism of each additional poem (under 100 lines) is 2s. It is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed and that a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed.

THE CENTURION'S FAREWELL

T. B. ROWAN

Gladly I go across the narrow seas,
Marching no more across the cold grey isle.
I go to where the gold Hesperides
Bask in the warmth of the imperial smile.
Yet have I seen thee in the summer's height,
Drowsed in the sun like the first haunt of Pan,
But, ere the day had shivered into night,
Before the wind Arcadian fancies ran.
Gladly I go, I tell myself; and yet
There will be times beneath Iberian vines
I will be striving vainly to forget;
I'll hear, when heavy eyelids close sleep's door,
The lonely curlew pipe across the moor.

CELEBRATION *

SONIA BENTZON

The thick white candles with their spires of flame,
Pick out the silver of the Christmas tree;
Austere and shining, with its forest dark
Transformed as if by moonlight and by ice,
A thing of fire, a blazing mystic dream,
A thought in light upon the Holy Feast.

Noble and simple, like a royal guest,
This night of all the year it wears a crown;
Although entrapped by walls it shares the hush
And blessing of the earth beneath the stars;
Is one with all the miracle and grace,
The singing angels and the wondering beasts.

In the chill darkness of the winter's eve
There blooms the comfort of the Christmas tree;
In candleshine and quietness it keeps
The sacrament of charity and light.
Its spread boughs bear the brimming chalices
And the gold wine is offered back to heaven.

* This refers to the Continental type of Christmas Tree as in Germany and Scandinavia, which has a deeper and more religious significance than perhaps its English equivalent.

FOR A DEAD INFANTA

JOHN BAYLISS

Because she was young and lovely, men mourned her,
Pausing in the endless pursuit of their mistresses.
Even the women spoke of her virginity
As something desirable and long-forgotten.

But her memory passes as the wind passes,
And her shadow among the roses
Will no longer harden in the sun;
Nor at night will the troubadour
Stare at her lighted window.

For since she was young, the young will forget her,
Until, perhaps, growing old they may recall
Her gold dress, the pallor of her face, dark hair,
And wonder if, after all,
It had been better to end life earlier.

TO A VIOLIN

MAISIE RADFORD

Beautiful fiddles of the golden names:
Amati, Gagliano and Guarnerius,
Grancino, Sanctus, Stradivarius;
Rich as the polished maple of their frames,
Sweet as the mellow beauty of their tone,
And you, my own,
My Gabriele, would I could make for you
Word-music that should sound as pure and true,

Piatellini, they say, carved out the wood
In Gabriele's work-shop: the soft pine
And the hard maple, drew out the design,
Testing each part to see if it was good;
And when at last he knew that all was right
And Master Gabriele well content,
Then you were sent
To some rich Florentine for his delight
And sang under his hand
In Prelude, Gigue and stately Saraband.

So did you voice each player in his turn,
So did you learn
How every century and country sings,
Yielding to every age your vibrant strings,
Preluding soft
A Pastorale or a Fugue of Bach
Hidden away in some old organ loft
In Siena or in Rome or Eisenach,
Or filling a great hall with melody;
And now at last I take you reverently.

Who knows who waked the music in you first?
Or who shall take
You, Gabriele, from my hands at last
And tune you to the echoes of the past,
Or at what unknown fountains he shall slake
His music thirst?
When he, and all of those who held you dear
Are but vibrations in eternity,
Then, Gabriele, he shall play, and hear
Steal into his spirit quietly
All that we passing players held sublime,
The overtones of longing of all time.

SHEEP

PHOEBE HESKETH

The lambs beneath a white-fleeced hawthorn tree
Leap for a joy forgotten by the sheep
Who wish for nothing rarer than the grass.
And sometimes we
Like sheep walk head down, blind, and unaware
That larks are building topless spires of sound,
Lifting them stone by stone above the ground.
A spiral stair
Of music winds unending to the sun.
And because we cannot hear or see the end,
We bind our joy to something we can bend
Back to ourselves till we are bound in earth,
For who can keep
Bubbles of song that burst beyond a dream?
We grip the fact and keep awake — like sheep.

TRYST

CARLA LANYON LANYON

It is so early, lambs lie in the frost
And the empty, twisted tape of the road
Glows orange in a half uprisen sun.

In ivy churchyards bunched cold daffodils
Pile on the breasts of farmers and their wives
Who keep the last and the perpetual Lent.

Here a barn and there a kiln,
And now five elms in line beyond the plough;
All these I leave behind —

To hum of engine drinking in the miles,
Ticking the wired posts like a minute clock
With valley villages to mark the quarters —

Till I come to the place of no more daffodils,
Climb the hump of road at the chalky hill,
Dip down into a different, cleaner world.

And I am singing as I go
To greet the proud and the implacable,
The moody and the wild, the musical,
My lover and my life, the sea. The sea!

TO A VENETIAN LADY

MICHAEL IVENS

He stares at you and bows, his hand on heart,
A master of his multifarious art
As haughty head erect you canter by.
Lovely Venetian and too-willing flirt,
Beware this solemn bearded man for he
Is Dürer and will swiftly steal your soul
By a glance. Apply your spurs and fly
Before he plucks the meaning from your face,
Your shameless eyes, your hand upon your skirts,
And copper-plates them in his memory.

Too late! You've drawn your reins and turned to look
At the great man. That night you're in his book
Of charcoal sketches for some distant use
As wood-cut or as painted allegory.

Meanwhile you'll boast how that ingenious
German smiled and bowed. Alas, he will abuse
Your glance, so delicately amorous,
For he has all the base unchivalry,
The heartless treachery of genius.

And he'll engrave your soul, that very gesture
At your skirts. You'll ride into his picture
Upon the beast of abomination.
Better if you had not looked upon
This man. You'll hold the cup of degradation
Throughout these centuries of shame
In his Apocalypse. And then St. John
Himself will smile to hear of all your fame
As Dürer's wretched Whore of Babylon.

NIGHT PRELUDES IN THE SUN

E. B. W. CHAPPELOW

The gleam, the dream, I will not let it go,
Although the heavy years upon me grow,
Though age may say high visions are for youth,
I will not let it go, the dream, the truth.
Still in the orient sky there burns and glows
The royal heart of heaven's mystic rose,
And steeps my sense in fragrance and keeps young
My questing spirit, still the Muse's tongue
Transmutes, though faint, seraphic laud and hymn,
The clear hosannas of the cherubim
And angel choirings, still before my eyes
The blessèd walk the fields of Paradise.
The gleam, the dream, I will not let it go,
Although the heavy years upon me grow,
But I will take it for my gonfalon
Whereunder I may march serenely on,
For though the flowers wither in my hand,
And waste and yet more waste the darkening land,
The night o'ercast and long, and one by one
My stars go out, night preludes in the sun.
I will go on in confidence and strength
Towards the dawn and when my feet at length
Have reached the bourne, life's furthest verge have trod,
I'll lay my dream upon the knees of God.

WATCHER OF THE SKIES

STANTON A. COBLENTZ

He in whose history light has barely time
To wing its way beyond our neighbour spheres,
Looks out across a thousand million years
To altitudes where thought alone can climb.
And he, a particle of salt and slime,
Who ranges a point in space, attunes his ears
To choirs and paeans of the worlds, and peers
Through measureless chasms of the starred sublime.

Surely, if mortal searchings thus can cross
The deeps of distance and eternity,
The finite and the infinite merge as one.
And the vast surges of the cosmic force
Blend the revolving ages as they flee,
The small sky-gazer, and the super-sun.

MARIGOLD

P. E. DUNN

When the curious seed
Bursts its brown case
The white root sinks
Down into the darkness
Where seeps the white cloud
Distilled from the sea.
There in the darkness
The root remembers,
Drinks the earth's body
In sun-drawn wine.
The root
Remembering
Sings,
And the green stem
And the unfolding leaves
Hear with joy the root's song:
Eagerly, knowingly, purposeful,
Seek their appointed end:
The burst of gold from the green bud,
The dry brown seed on the dark earth.

A SCOT IN ARGENTINA: WALTER OWEN, POET

By PATRICIO GANNON*

Walter Owen, a Scotsman born in Glasgow seventy years ago, worked for a time as office-boy in the office of David MacBrayne, founder of the great line of steamers, and then went abroad to establish himself in Buenos Aires as a customs broker. He wrote poetry, and when he died last autumn he was famous as one of the most distinguished poets the Argentine has ever known.

All his life as a man of letters Owen kept up the great tradition of English literature among people of other languages than Shakespeare's. Still more important, he is to be regarded as one gifted with that rare endowment of transmitting gracefully into his native tongue the works of poets and writers outside the Anglo-Saxon sphere. He was well steeped in the languages of the South of Europe, principally Spanish, and he therefore devoted much of his efforts in selecting from the writers of Spain and her Latin-American countries all that he wished to see in English regalia.

Walter Owen rendered into English works of a most difficult and complex nature, such as the national sagas of Spanish-speaking lands. He did this with grace, and competently united and reconciled extremes, for he was one who knew of no barriers of thought. To him all races spoke only one language in poetry. He might well have been inspired by those famous lines which Daniel wrote at the beginning of the seventeenth century concerning translation:

> . . . that better world of men
> Whom neither deserts, ocean, rocks nor sands,
> Can keep from the intertraffic of the mind.

A major achievements was his English verse-rendering of *Martin Fierro*, a poem of legendary fame in Argentina, where it is considered the cornerstone of all Argentine letters. Like the Bible and Shakespeare in English, *Martin Fierro* is a rich mine of proverbial wisdom and crowded action in that weird world of an equestrian race, the River Plate "gauchos" of the last century.

The story of how this book was published in England is well worth remembering. Walter Owen had been working many years in Buenos Aires on this poem, and he finally completed it and gave the manuscript to Sir Eugen Millington-Drake, who was then Counsellor of the British

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Embassy in Buenos Aires. Millington-Drake sent the manuscript to an old friend, a well-known Oxford publisher, who sat up all night reading the poem, entranced. It was published subsequently by the Shakespeare Head Press in a beautifully produced limited edition with "gaucho" line drawings by Alberto Guiraldes. It is now a bibliographical rarity, though a photostat edition taken from this first edition and published in the United States is available. *Martin Fierro* has been translated into most European languages, but Owen's English version easily takes first place among them. As Sir Eugen has said, "it has the raciness of an old Border ballad."

Walter Owen's business life kept him in touch with an ever-moving world of ships, sea captains, and unfamiliar languages. I have often thought that it was because he dared not displease the influential British philistines who were then his chief customers that he wrote his poems in secret — "upon the honey'd middle of the night". He once told me that he signed his first published poems as "Gilbert de Saint Ouen" to avoid incurring the distrust of bank managers who until then had considered him as a sound and safe business man!

He published an allegory of the first world war, *The Cross of Carl*, in 1937, and, several years later, *The Sonnets of G.S.O.* and *A Key to the Sonnets of G.S.O. An Ode to France* followed in 1940. His translations in verse included *La Araucana*, an epic poem by Alonso de Ercilla of Spanish-Chilean fame; *Don Juan Tenorio*, by Jose Zorrilla, for a century a favourite play of the Hispanic world; and lastly when already infirm and in hospital, the epic of Uruguay, *Tabare*, by Zorrilla de San Martin. He translated verse for verse, never allowing himself to forget that he was a poet.

ONE WORD

DARIAN SMITH

If, in some unguarded moment
I, bewildered, child-like
Said I loved
But did not understand what love was —
Be gentle and forget:
And turn your face away
When next we meet,
Lest she, happy she
By your side, wonder
What flame has died
To leave these ashes in our eyes.

SPOUTING AND DRONING*

In Scotland, the Arts Council note in their eighth annual report, there is a "steadily increasing demand for a poetry recitalist to be included in concerts," and throughout these islands resistance to what our culture-bureaucrats presumably call recitalizations seems to be weakening. This is a good thing, and would be an even better one if poets, like composers and dramatists, were entitled to a royalty on each performance. It is no good, however, pretending that the declamation of verse, whatever its character, is unattended by risks, and sometimes by inconveniences, to all concerned. The recitalist, upon whose single-handed efforts the success of the occasion so largely depends, has first to select a poem or poems to recite, and this is not as easy as it sounds. Some poems are rather long, others are very short. The latter have certain attractions. A varied repertoire gives the recitalist the opportunity to display his or her virtuosity by running through a whole gamut of different moods and metres. The disadvantages here are that the audience will like some of the pieces better than others and that its more sublunary members will resent being roused, every so often, by polite applause from the trance into which they have automatically fallen. For these the longer type of poem represents a less severe ordeal.

It is nowadays very difficult for the recitalist to decide to what extent, if any, mime, gesture and grimace should accompany his delivery of the verse. In the good old days an activist policy in this respect was *de rigueur*. "Cannon," he bawled, "to the right of them, Cannon to the left of them, Volleyed and thundered"; and he accompanied the words by pointing excitably first to the left and then to the right. It was no doubt an optical illusion that by the end of "How We Brought the Good News from Aix to Ghent" his evening trousers appeared to be flecked with foam, but there was certainly nothing imaginary about the thirst from which many of the audience were suffering by the time he finished "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

In modern poetry, of course, there is not generally a great deal of scope for dramatic by-play. The *avant-garde* march somewhat inscrutably, and upon the stage their interpreter can seldom feel justified in shading his eyes and staring intently across the body of the hall, in slapping his thigh, in flinging up his arm and reeling backwards or in simulating the receipt of a flesh wound in the left shoulder. But does this make it any easier for him? There he is, in full view of the audience. To assume a posture of dejection, permitting himself occasionally a mirthless smile, may harmonize exactly with the mood of his poet; but may it not pall, after a time, upon the audience? There must be times when the recitalist sighs wistfully for "The Green Eye of the Little Yellow God"; and perhaps the audience sighs too.

*With kind permission: from *The Times*

POETRY ABOVE POLITICS

BRILLIANT INTERNATIONAL CONGRESSES IN SPAIN

By YORKE CROMPTON*

Just over a year ago the first International Poetry Congress ever held in Spain gathered, in the open air, at Segovia. Enthusiastic audiences heard poets who had travelled from all over Europe and from every country of Latin America. Recitals were given during picnics in the loveliest and most historic parts of Spain. Turning torero, some of the poets tried their hands at coursing bulls.

Roy Campbell and a leading Rumanian poet read their translations of St. John of the Cross in the monastery where the saint had lived, and afterwards the group made a pilgrimage to the home of Antonio Machado, and there recited many of his works. At this Congress, for the first time in history, Catalan and Castilian poets met in friendship; and when the famous Dionisio Rodruego, warrior of the Blue Division, embraced the finest living Catalan poet, Carlos Riba, who had lived with Machado through his last moments in a French concentration camp, the beholders were moved to great emotion.

This year's Congress, held in September at the College of Hernan Cortes, Salamanca, was even more resplendent. Vandercammen of Belgium; Aubert of Switzerland; Cela, Alonso, and Alexandre of Spain; Coronel of Nicaragua; Carranza of Colombia; and Roy Campbell — all of these returned to greater triumphs. Among the host of other poets were Luc Estrang (Literary Editor of *La Croix*), the Italian Ungarette, Gerardo Diego, Alonso Gamo, Leopoldo Panero, Garcia Nicho, Luis Rosales, and Montesinos.

Before the monastery of Pena de Francia, which can be reached only by a spiral path to where it rises from a peak, they stood like Druids far above the clouds that drifted thinly round about the slopes, looking out across four other mountain ranges and a quarter of the pride of Spain, to send their words re-echoing down the gorges for three thousand feet or more. The recital ended with a mock-pagan ceremony, in which Roy Campbell and Alonso Gamo held the youngest member of the concourse out over the abyss, as if to hurl him as a sacrifice upon the waiting rocks below.

Then all climbed down to the fairy-tale village of La Alberca, where the houses are wooden and have roofs of cork. There the women, who still wear the garments of two thousand years ago, danced before them. Wine was poured into the Maire in a ritual called the *trago Albercano*, or

* From material supplied by a participant.

Albercan gulp. Roy Campbell and Ramon Masoliver — brother grenade-throwers of the Legion — held rockets in their hands and fired them at the ground before their feet, to wild applause.

The Catalan poets were in full strength; and for the second time Carlos Riba carried off the day. Luc Estrang made a very moving speech to thank the Barcelona poet Rafael Santos Forella, who organized the Congress, and Carranza, who was its President and Chairman.

T. S. Eliot and Dr. Edith Sitwell, who were invited, unfortunately could not come; but Dr. Charles Ley of the British Council, translator of Lope de Vega and Marañon, was there to represent his country.

EDITORIAL LETTER-BOX

DYLAN THOMAS

Sir — May I pay, at his passing, my own humble tribute to the genius that was Dylan Thomas? How we feared initially that his almost miraculous gift of verbal imagery would be overwhelmed by its own misdirection and obscurity! Yet how right we were to hope; for the obscurity was cast away and metric and emotional control rose to great heights in his latest books, *Deaths and Entrances* and *In Country Sleep*, published in 1946 and 1951. Although he spoke no Welsh he brought fully fledged into his poetry the assonantal mastery and counterpoint of a Celtic heritage and we cannot estimate the extent to which he thus extended the power and possibility of English poetry.

Generations to come will delight in his poems, "A Refusal To Mourn", "Poem in October", "Holy Spring", "Fern Hill", and "In Country Sleep", in which he found a new maturity, not only for their majesty of language but also for their enunciation of an innocent faith, and for the magnificence of their perception.

Perhaps above all he was the poet of childhood recollection at its zenith, skeined with that immortality which fused Wordsworth's own great ode. What further splendours, but for his early death, Dylan Thomas would have laid at our feet we can only conjecture and lament.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

TRADITIONAL AND MODERN — YES

Gentlemen — May I thank Mr. Zuidema for his letter, the first in this controversy to attempt to establish a sensible perspective and balance between Modernism and Traditionalism? It is good to see that he states his case without the dogmatism and prejudice so noticeable in many of the other letters and articles on this subject.

"Genuine poetry," T. S. Eliot has said, "can communicate before it

is understood," and that for the intuitive is undoubtedly the truth. Modern poetry is not obscure merely to tantalize, nor is it a kind of confidence trick to ensnare the gullible. Sincere modern poetry is obscure for reasons which are not altogether the fault of the poets. The outward conditions and events which the last few poetic generations have experienced have forced the poet to look inward and become introspective in his search for truth, and that of course has brought with it the realisation of the complexity of the emotions, and the complexities which lie behind differing experiences — as the humble and unprejudiced Binnet pointed out in Stuart Holroyd's article.

But egocentricity is not entirely dead of communication. It has much that is universal within it, and, as an approach shown in most of modern poetry, will, I am sure, become more widely understood in the future when such sensibilities and attitudes of mind will be the more easily appreciated by perhaps even those with "highly differentiated intellects". Development, as in Experimentalism, as another letter pointed out, has never been at first appreciated. Could this be because readers have not been immediately fitted as regards outlook and attitude to appreciate it?

But why do the rigid traditionalists despair? In the main the moderns have shown a practical respect and consciousness to tradition by transforming it to contemporary conditions and outlook.

Let those who condemn because communication seems to have been disregarded wait perhaps another ten years before they condemn further. In time the worthless will find oblivion and the poets appreciation. Let us at the present be thankful that poetry shows so much vitality and determination.

HAROLD WILSON

"THE BALLAD OF SIR JOHN PHILPOT"

KENNETH HARE: AUTHOR TO REVIEWER

Dear Herbert Palmer — As a friend and an admirer of your work, may I query a few of your strictures upon my poem of the above title, in the October number of *The Poetry Review*? You say, "Kenneth Hare's art stands right away from the restrained, classical diction of Ruth Pitter." If "classical diction" be that which is rhythmical, clear, terse and simple, my lines will stand up to the test. Space only permits a few examples, but:

> As daffodils these girls have grace.
> (Beauty Queens at a Pageant)
>
> Blanche, his small wife, blithe and gay
> Loves him, he her; on either part,
> Which loves which more, 'twere hard to say.
> (Blanche)

If we take "blithe" as referring to the qualities of her mind, and "gay" to her appearance, could the substance of this stanza be expressed more briefly in prose?

You accuse me of borrowing from "speech that died during the last century: not all of it as late as D. G. Rossetti." But can one talk of *speech dying* upon a certain day as though it were a cat or a dog? One might as well assert that certain notes of the piano died with the Abbé Liszt! A poet is a verbal magician; and if he discovers words which possess the qualities he seeks for evoking atmosphere, or for creating effects of sound or colour, he will adopt them and re-infuse them with his own vitality. And then Rossetti is not Beowulf. He survived almost into my own day. A reader must be illiterate who finds his vocabulary baffling: and it is not for the illiterate that I write.

Lastly you say that my poem "will chiefly attract readers who are interested in the period of Richard II." Fortunately my royalty sheets show that the "Ballad" is read by more than a mere handful of specialists. And why should I not take for my hero the most heroic of London's Lord Mayors? If Beaumont and Fletcher could write of Boadicea, John Ford of Henry VII, and Shakespeare himself of Henries IV, V, VI and their times, why may not I, a modern, challenge for myself a similar licence?

KENNETH HARE

FRIDAY EVENINGS AT PORTMAN SQUARE

"The Battle for Beauty is Never Finally Won"

Here is a list of New Year Programmes, arranged by the Readings Committee, for Friday evenings, 6-30 to 7-30 approx., between January and April — "Everybody Welcome." Admission 1s. Non-members 2s.

January	15	Margaret Rawlings reads poems of her own choice. Chairman: The President, Thomas Moult.
	22	Review of the current *Poetry Review*. Editorial Board meet Readers.
	29	Audience Night. Everybody invited to read their favourite or their own poems (limit 3 minutes).
February	5	A Garland of Poetry. Students of London School of Dramatic Art, introduced by the Principal, Gertrude Pickersgill, B.A., L.R.A.M.
	12	Brains Trust. John Graddon, question-master.
	19	Violet Adamson and Charles Doran.
	26	"Epic Poetry." Lesley Deane and Richard Ainley.
March	5	Play Night. *Hippolytus* of Euripides.
	12	Poetry Recital by Irene Brent and her Pupils.
	19	Wilton Cole reads poems of his own choice.
	26	"Our Own Poets." John Graddon, Herbert Bluen, Robert Armstrong.
April	2	A. E. Coppard reads his poems and stories. Chairman, Thomas Moult.
	9	Poetry Reading by the Society's Gold Medallists. (Arranged by Mary Giles).

Book Reviews . . .

LUCKY DIP

By STEPHEN GRAHAM

The Faber Book of Twentieth Century Verse, edited by J. Heath-Stubbs and David Wright (Faber and Faber, 12s. 6d.).

The first half of the twentieth century shows rather poorly in this anthology. That is perhaps because Alfred Noyes, Hilaire Belloc and A. P. Herbert are not in the book, and the only American shown is Ezra Pound. I feel that some of the English might have moved up to make room for Vachel Lindsay, Don Marquis, Edgar Lee Masters and Sandburg. It is true that there are six poems by Pound, but the anthology needed the other Americans to give it lustre. In poetry there are no frontiers between ourselves and the United States, only copyright laws and fees for permission to reprint. The latter is an important barrier, some publishers and agents being so greedy that they are causing serious damage to good literature and its wider dissemination.

Anthologies and Selections — like Arnold's from Wordsworth — have a valuable function in presenting the best or at least the remarkable and specially original verses by a poet. The sheerly beautiful is not lost in a welter of second-rate or obscure efforts. Some poet stands forth clear and shining and can be identified as you identify a planet in the sky. For in my opinion a poet has to be identified by his best poems. You should not pretend to take an average of all that he has had printed. That is the supercilious intellectual criterion, satisfying the critical faculty which is conceited as Lucifer. And an anthology of the verse of a certain period should not have the character of general average: it should be the best even if that does involve the inclusion of poems which have appeared frequently in other collections.

The editors of the *Faber Book* say they have not compiled their selection by consulting other anthologies, but have read through individual collected editions to find what they personally liked or wanted. So we have 330 pages of verses mostly unfamiliar or at least unexpected. Curious they could only find one D. H. Lawrence poem to go in and two Chestertons while Barker and Stevie Smith have six apiece!

The book is a Lucky Dip. Putting your fingers in and turning a page at random you may turn up a prize, but you may draw a blank. You may get a lovely line by Eliot, "Weave, weave the sunlight in your hair," or a perfect verse from Yeats —

> Beloved, may your sleep be sound
> That have found it where you fed.
> What were all the world's alarms
> To mighty Paris when he found

Sleep upon a golden bed
That first dawn in Helen's arms? —

or re-read, with renewed pleasure, Kipling's "Ford o'Kabul river", or discover Roy Campbell at Toledo. But on the other hand you may have picked out Robert Nichols' indelicate drivel about a flea. "Hip, hop!"

Well, that's the moral of this life, eh? Take what is and chance what may be, as Browning wrote in his poem about eating ortolans in Italy.

LOVELY, GROWING OLD

By THOMAS MOULT

O Lovely England, by Walter de la Mare (Faber, 10s. 6d.).
Two Worlds for Memory, by Alfred Noyes (Sheed and Ward, 21s.).
The Gleam and the Dark, by Alexander Buist (George Ronald, 7s. 6d.).

Between old age and death there is an elemental difference. Death comes soon as well as late, old age is not inevitable until mortality has endured far beyond its prime — and if we survive without too much suffering the inexperience and disillusionment of our youthful and middle years and live long enough it can be a most happy and enviable thing. "Let me grow lovely, growing old" is the prayer of an American poet, and the desire ought to be awakened early: we can hardly be too young for it, indeed: otherwise the warning in certain grim quarters that the slow closing of one's life is liable to mean frustration and terror will certainly become all too fully justified.

Few great men — truly great — have grown old without growing lovely. Shakespeare's serenity and charitableness in his retirement is foreshadowed in his final plays — *Forgive, forgive, forgive* was an overtone in his music. And the latest book by Walter de la Mare, who celebrated his eightieth birthday last year, has for its keynote a thoroughly characteristic poem that is to be found half-way through the pages, not at the beginning:

Come, then; come, some quiet hour;
Over book, or needle, dream;
Gather here and there a flower —
Find thyself in them!

Surely then unto the East
Turn upon my side shall I;
Find at length my endless rest,
And, once more, happy, die!

Neither sentimentality, bombast, or bemoaning, nor the faintest suspicion of any of them, touches the lyricism that never flags in a volume which, containing seventy pieces, is partly derived from work written "as far back", we are told in the author's prefatory note, "as the second decade of this century". Confidence and courage, triumph and even happiness itself, although the shadows must have fallen on his maturity

as they fall on every man's, cannot ever have deserted the author, and we have proof of it in a poem which concludes with these lines, however soon or late they were written:

> Nor faith, nor love, nor dread, nor closest friend
> Can from this nearing bourne your footfall keep;
> But there even conflict with your sleep shall end,
> And every grief be reconciled in Sleep.

Strength and kindliness, geniality and sternness: how admirably these qualities are contrasted in Mr. de la Mare's poetry and Mr. Noyes's prose! (Incidentally it is often the critic's complaint that poets write only bad prose: but if we need support for a flat denial — which we do not — it may be found anywhere and everywhere in *Two Worlds for Memory*, probably the first part of Alfred Noyes's autobiography, though he does not say so). The author never hesitates to don the cloak of Sir Galahad when he is dealing with certain literary tendencies of the past half-century. The writings of James Joyce and the personal conduct of Hugh Walpole are recollected not in a scandal-making way but with the spirit that sets a sword flashing. As for Miss Edith Sitwell, the reader cannot help feeling sorry for her when we learn that Sir Edmund Gosse, who took the chair at a debate in which she was a protagonist, begged Mr. Noyes to refrain from making fun of the "new" poetry because "she was in a highly nervous condition and already on the point of fainting."

It is to be hoped that Alfred Noyes will devote considerably more of his next (if any) autobiographical pages to the poets and men of letters he has known. We are eagerly prepared already for his candid commentaries, especially after his recollection of what "one of the most distinguished of living alienists" said to him: "Many of my patients have been turning out work that I find quite indistinguishable from some of the stuff which is called modern art and poetry. Very often it seems to me an expression of what may be called mental deliquescence."

Never since the appearance of *The Loom of Years* in 1902 has Mr. Noyes's vigorous yet always melodious poetry been less than a complete antidote to "mental deliquescence" in modern verse. And growing old, grown lovely is a mind which, burdened by the nearly total loss of eyesight, can feel, more than the deprivation of reading, the inability to see the expression on the faces of the loved ones around him. After *O Lovely England* and *Two Worlds for Memory* many of us are bound to find ourselves submitting the younger writers to a test: Will their work in the years to come, after summer is over, show anything like the quiet beauty, the grace, the *goodness* of these two distinguished veterans? It depends on the impressions that are stored up — and which they seek to convey — during their artistic maturity. We are confident about a Scottish author, Alexander Buist, after reading his second book, *The Gleam and the Dark*, a collection in which we have the pathos and sublime of human life

expressed with heart as well as art. "Tay Bridge, Early Memory," "This Perfect Spring," "Comfort for Isobel," "White Roses," "I Sorrow" — these and nearly a hundred others indicate diversity, versatility, and always the genuine poet's appreciation of the world around him or, one may add, his depreciation. And, answering our not intentionally intrusive question, Mr. Buist's hope for his future is "a cloudless island afternoon for last salute to lovely things."

SERENDIPITY CASTLE*

By KATHLEEN VALMAI RICHARDSON

The Private Dining Room and other Verses, by Ogden Nash (Dent, 8s. 6d.)

Back-Room Joys, by Justin Richardson (The Harvill Press, 7s. 6d.).

There is always a tremulous moment before opening a new Nash. Can he keep it up? We are slightly older than when last we met. Is he going to show us up as elderly slug-wits, or have we ripened together? The first few pages of *The Private Dining Room* allay our doubts — we can be our age, he is with us:

> Oh golly, to gabble upon the shoulder
> Of someone my own age, or even older.

I believe there exist intellectuals who conscientiously strive to analyse Nash — pep-rhymes, fourteen-foot lines and all — possibly to reassure themselves for their helpless addiction. What could be more unnecessary? Ogden Nash is no dispenser of drugs or of panaceas, he delivers the goodies in a beautiful, bounteous gift-parcel. None of the familiar treats are missing and delicious surprise *bonnes bouches* are tucked into the crannies, not forgetting the "pepper and salt, vinegar, oil and mustard" which he so rightly insists upon for the salad dressing. Those who see symbolism oozing from every poem might do well to start with the one on page 46.

His coercion of the English language (and, on occasion, the French) is as remarkable as ever. Strangely enough, though many contemporary poets have been rapped over the knuckles for experimenting in this direction, we have yet to see a professorial comparison made between say, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Nash. It would be interesting no doubt, to draw conclusions from the evidence sifted as to the success achieved in communication by their individual methods. I am not going to try; I cherish the dish above the ingredients. One might hazard that in order to clutch handfuls of words and force them to his will, a poet needs both technique and willpower; to clothe the result with wit and sparkle he needs to be an artist.

New readers of Ogden Nash who are expecting Light Verse in the English tradition may begin to wonder whether they hadn't better refresh

* Critic's note to Reader: *Serendipity* is Nash (see his book) for "making happy and unexpected discoveries by chance."

their acquaintance with the Classics, with Kipling and Dickens, and perhaps, with the world in general. Perhaps too, it takes a master to laugh at the human race and to make his victims feel glad to belong to it, at the same time. The nicest kind of animals pop in and out of the Nash Dining Room too — in fact, the King of Serendipity still sits securely upon his throne, and long may he continue to do so.

Readers of *Punch* will be pleased to find Justin Richardson's *Back-Room Joys* collected for the reacquaintance which most of these adroit little pieces stand up to very well. In his preface, Mr. Richardson wisely warns his reader not to settle down in the back-room for a good guzzle but to drop in there whenever the need for a tonic occurs. This is sound advice, for whereas Mr. Nash's chief implement is the proliferant syllable, that of Mr. Richardson is the italic; and a *continuous* consumption of these tends to dull one's reactions to the mixture . . . which would be a pity.

ASPECTS OF UNITY

By GEOFFREY JOHNSON

Poets and Mystics, by E. I. Watkin (Sheed and Ward, 21/-).

This is a series of studies by a cultured and broad-minded Roman Catholic. Some are previously unpublished in part and others are reprinted, but all are aspects of one theme and are unified not only by the personality of the author but by the earlier general essays on Poetry and Mysticism, Shakespeare, and the interrelation of drama and religion. More specific, naturally, in their treatment are the essays on Thomas Goodwin the Puritan, Dame Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe, the Crashaws father and son, Dom Augustine Baker, John Smith the Cambridge Platonist, Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity, and what will appeal most to poetry-lovers, a close study of Henry Vaughan, the Silurist, and his modern affinity, Ruth Pitter.

The writer is very wide in his reading, copious in his literary parallels and often penetrating in his judgement, for example on the mixture of supreme poet and shameless pot-boiler that is Shakespeare. Not that the author's learning does not occasionally lapse into such tedious pedantry as the over-repeated distinction between anima and animus. Another danger from which he does not always escape is that which besets all writers on divinity and aesthetics: terms may be so vague and abstract that they cancel each other out, so proving nothing at all, or leaving the reader with the impression that the opposite of what the writer is saying may be equally true. The subtlety of thought which is required for such a spiritual theme, and which may sometimes break down into mere word-spinning, is on the whole well sustained and achieves a genuine brilliance of paradox in its treatment of Goodwin, who, though a Puritan, was enamoured of the Sacred Heart.

What is implicit in the book, at least for this reviewer, is that poetry and religion in the wide sense are one, and a complete lack of belief in God or, if you like, in the infinitely vaster world of the non-self is the prime cause of the sickness and emptiness in much verse of to-day. For this implication alone the book should be most welcome to lovers of true poetry.

OBJECTIVE, SUBJECTIVE

By ROBERT ARMSTRONG

From Many Times and Lands, by F. L. Lucas (Bodley Head, 18s.).

Winter Seas, by W. H. Boore (Fortune Press, 6s.).

The Constant Fever, by William McDermott (Fortune Press, 6s.).

In a recent survey of modern trends in poetry, Herbert Read, while demonstrating that the poet has moved to the periphery of social and national life concerned with his own dilemma and disillusion, enquired whether the time has not come for him to return to the centre in the way of the minstrels of old as a commentator and story-teller. F. L. Lucas in his wide-ranging collection of poems and ballads, offers for our delight his own practical response to this speculation. The erudite preface complains that poets are losing their audience by esoteric concern with their own obscure subjective reactions to the times. They have yielded to the novelists and popular prose writers what is their own birthright as objective reporters; and he urges that, using their native weapons of imagination, economy and word beauty, poets should make a counter attack.

Mr. Lucas illustrates his thesis brilliantly in these stories of many lands and eras, from Ancient Greece to the latest of our world conflicts. Myth and Legend are mingled with history, and he carries his profound knowledge and insight into many races, their languages and traditions, as lightly as a swiftly running canoe down a stream of ever-changing wonder. There could be no better support for his argument than the collection of poems of the last seventeen years by one who is an outstanding poet and scholar, and I shall turn to it again and again despite my knowledge that it is the product of a special pleading.

For it is special pleading when he infers that the poet's province as a story-teller is essentially objective. However vivid and splendid the stories there is another province in his work, equal, if not more valid, as the distiller of experience and emotion. Of this I am reminded by two other books. The first is *Winter Seas,* the summation of experiences by a poet who has lived observantly, suffered and understood, and who wishes to share his conclusions and quiet reconciliations. It is a book of personal lyrics, expressing a simple and melodious gift and a simple faith. The second, *The Constant Fever,* is by a young man at the beginning of his journey. If not yet with the same lyrical accomplishment, it ranges in short poems with a vivid awareness over many facets of early experience. Here is the incidental disillusionment: "For he who sips of love sips lingering Death," "For words have always hurt me more

than pain" — yet there is growing aspiration and understanding also: "If only we all had a common goal, If only we all had a common need."

Both these first books have a clarity of subjective expression and appeal. We are reminded of the twofold nature of our mysterious art and that the authentic poet of either type will do more than claim his audience; he will deserve it.

MR. CHAPPELOW AND OTHERS

By E. D. BANGAY

The Garter Town, by E. B. W. Chappelow (Fortune Press, 7s. 6d.).
The Dark Tarn and Other Poems, by A. V. Stuart (George Ronald, Oxford, 7s. 6d.).
Collected Poems, by Anna Gordon Keown (Caravel Press, 30s.).
The Sequence of Dreams and Other Poems, by John Wheatley (Pimpernel Press, 2s. 6d.).

In the many books of verse that come from the various publishers to-day one does not look for spectacular successes or world-stirring emotions but for something that touches the heart and delights the ear, though it may be that these qualities are not always found together. In these four books merit is shown and pleasure given in four different ways.

The Garter Town by E. B. W. Chappelow, as we might expect, is a book of poems about royal Windsor. Mr. Chappelow has collected much factual history and turns it into verse which tells of the men and women, gartered and ungartered, who have dwelt in the Castle, fittingly in royal splendour or abjectly as its heavy-hearted prisoners. Each part of the great building has its own episode or associations, and there are full notes to serve as introduction to many of the poems. Technical as well as imaginative merit is here consistently: Mr. Chappelow's work never fails to ensure it.

Miss Stuart's new collection, *The Dark Tarn,* shows her sensitive handling of many themes dominated by her ardent sympathy for humankind and her constant delight in natural beauty. The poems are also enriched with underlying significances and undertones. Anna Gordon Keown is brave enough to take the romantic themes that some declare are dead and to clothe them with beauty of image and form and to breathe into them a new life. Her publisher and her illustrator, Guy Wordsell, both contribute to make her *Collected Poems* a thing of beauty also.

In *The Sequence of Dreams* John Wheatley reveals himself as a dreamer with his head high among the stars and his feet well planted on the good earth. He can find praise for all good things and convinces his reader of their goodness by his strong simplicity of faith and his excellent craftsmanship. Mr. Wheatley is a recent winner of our Premium Prize — and a deserving winner, too.

NEW AND OLD WINE

Notes on Books received : by The Editorial Staff

(The inclusion of a book in these notes does not preclude a subsequent review)

"This (November) morning, though a keen blowing frost, in my walk before breakfast I finished my Duet which you were pleased to praise so much. Whether I have uniformly succeeded, I will not say: but here it is to you, though it is not an hour old. Tell me honestly how you like it: and point out whatever you think faulty." The letter from which this is a quotation might have been written by any young poet in any generation, if he be modest and anxious about his work — and hearty enough to take a wintry walk before breakfast. But it was Robert Burns who wrote it, a hundred and sixty years ago. How human he was we know well enough: and as we also are human the well-edited *Selected Letters of Robert Burns* now republished as one of "The World's Classics" (Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 5s.), enable us to believe almost that we are being written to by a close friend.

John Gawsworth brings out the human side of Milton in his admirable introduction to a new edition of *The Complete English Poems of John Milton* in Macdonald's Illustrated Classics (10s. 6d.). This is one of several poetry reprints which have been a welcome feature of the past year's publishing. Among them is *Alfred Tennyson: Poetical Works,* not forgetting the plays (Cumberlege: Oxford University Press, 12s. 6d.). Another Cumberlege publication — as handsomely produced as them all — is *The Poetical Works of Robert Bridges* (12s. 6d.), a collection which includes "The Testament of Beauty". In the long-established Muses' Library under the imprint of Routledge and Kegan Paul (15s.) is a new volume *Poems by John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester,* edited by V. de S. Pinto, who is Professor of English at Nottingham University.

Wilmot was born in 1647, so that we have gone a goodish way back from the time of Bridges, who died in 1930. And now we come forward to the present, and find, to begin appropriately, a new edition of Dr. Marie Stopes's selection of her poems entitled *We Burn* (De La More Press, 5s.). When this book made its first appearance Bernard Shaw said: "You are a poet all right. It can't be helped," and the Poet Laureate: "You are doing well what no one else could do." A beautiful frontispiece (portrait of the author), and twelve symbolical illustrations by the Spanish artist, Gregorio Prieto, enrich a fine-minded poet's achievement.

Ezra Pound's *ABC of Economics* (Peter Russell, 10s. 6d.) is a famous literary man's contribution to economics. "I shall have no peace until I get the subject off my chest": these are his first words: and he certainly does. There is no such thing as science in Theodora Roscoe's charming lyrics *St. Albans and Other Poems* (Alden and Blackwell — Eton, 3s. 6d.): the closing lines of "To a Fallen Airman" are "Earth and sweet flowers now claim Your gallant heart." An author who conceals her identity as "Marget Winkle" dedicates *I Serve and Other Poems* to Sir Gordon Richards. But there is nothing "racy" about these simple, thoughtful lyrics: they concern a broken marriage, harvest, "A Shropshire Lad in Bonnie Scotland", and — red hair. Miss Dallas Kenmare's *Collected Poems* (Burrows,

Cheltenham, 16s.) will be welcome to those who are acquainted with her heartening outlook on "the vast, endless life of the fields, the sky, and the creating sun."

The author of *The Phoenix-Flower,* D. J. Hall (Falcon Press, 18s.), is a novelist as well as a poet. We are not surprised, therefore, to find ourselves reading an epic of the war which fills its 222 pages. The story, well-written and powerful, not without music in flashes, concerns a much tried and often-tested man who resists and triumphs over adversity with spirit "infinitely renewed . . . the glory and the Phoenix-flower of life." Many readers will appreciate the fine mind behind it all. Maida Stanier is also a poet of quality. Her half-century of short poems in *Light and Shade* (Abbey Press, Abingdon-on-Thames, 2s. 6d.) are homely, kindly, and full of faith. "For if there is no love, what then?" The title of Laurence Clark's book of *Thirty-nine Preludes* (Villiers Publications) suggests music, and music there is, notably in such verses as "Rain at Night". Mr. Clark has ideas as well as music. Another Abbey Press production is *Knollsea Verses* by A. Mayo Redding (2s. 6d.), in which religious feeling is everywhere apparent. It is good to read a poem in memory of Katherine Bruce Glasier, one of the workers' unforgettable heroines. *The Vibrant Anvil,* twenty-three poems by Archibald Sinclair (Maclellan, Glasgow), is rich in technical achievement and imaginative appreciation of the Scottish landscape.

Now we go further afield. *Flames on the Wind,* is a skilful translation by W. K. Matthews from the Estonian of Gustav Suits (Boreas Publishing Co., 9s. 6d.), which will appeal to poetry students with world-wide interests. From America there are three volumes, all meritorious: *Journeys in Poetry,* by Ida Norton Munson (Wings Press, 2 dollars 50c) — "How restful are unhurried things!" is the keynote here: *Morning Fugues,* by Margaret Toarello (William-Frederick Press, 2 dollars) — a work of clear imagery intensively conveyed: and *There is a Tryst* by Mary Elizabeth Creglow (Bruce Humphries), devout, open-aired, "Surely God's finger here has rested." Finally, from Florence, Italy, comes *Tibia Myrtia* by Arthur Maquarie (Olive Press: and Simpkin Marshall), a dainty treasurable miniature by a sort of miniature Swinburne.

THE POETRY SOCIETY: ANNUAL GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual General Business Meeting of the Poetry Society (Incorporated) will be held at the offices of the Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, on Wednesday, 26th May, 1954 at 3.0 p.m., to receive the annual financial statement, and elect the general members of the General Council. Names of delegates representing Centres should be sent to the General Secretary not later than 10th April, 1954, together with names of the Centre representatives on the General Council.

Admission will be made upon production of membership cards.

Any member who wishes to bring any business before the Annual Meeting must give twenty-eight days' written notice thereof to the General Secretary. Nominations for membership to the General Council must be made by two members of the General Council or three unattached members twenty-eight days prior to the Meeting.

Any member wishing to inspect the audited Statement of Accounts before the General Business Meeting may do so at this office between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. (Saturdays excepted), or may have a copy sent on application enclosing a stamped addressed envelope after 30th April.

—By Order of the Council.

TOWARDS PARNASSUS

LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS SONNET AWARD

By KENNEDY WILLIAMSON

Wordsworth's plea, "Scorn not the sonnet", seems to have been taken to heart, for there were 120 entries!

It is a heartbreaking business to be adjudicator in such circumstances — not at all on account of the work involved, for if one is a lover of sonnets, there is joy in reading them, even the bad ones. The labour we delight in physics pain.

No, the heartbreak lies in having only one prize to award. Only twenty-seven poets were seriously in the running, but to withhold the prize from any one of these seems like an ingratitude, and I apologize to the following: Brian L. Pearce; Annabelle Merrifield; Nancy Dunstan; Michael Kelly; F. Maskell; Ilse Zuidema; Joan Beaumont; Helen Owen; A. Percival Needler; Agnes MacCarthy Hickey; Elsie M. Banister; Margery Smith; Miriam S. Foote; Florence L. Wickelgren; Donald Overy; W. R. Latham; W. H. Toulmin; Robert Whitehouse; A. E. Dodd; Alan Smithies; Josephine Ogle; Adam Girvan; Rev. J. C. Warland; G. J. Blundell; Margaret Rhodes.

The prize of ten pounds is divided equally between Paul Selver and Joyce Evelegh. It is extraordinarily interesting to have, in the precision of the sonnet, Mr. Selver's pastiche of Henley's hospital poems, which were in free verse; and there is something deeply moving in Miss Evelegh's pronouncement of Mount Everest on those who at last scaled her dazzling cone.

Apart from the prescribed rhyme-scheme of the Petrarchan sonnet, there are no rules that are obligatory. Yet one can make certain recommendations which, if followed, will tend to make sonnets better than they would otherwise be. Here are the present adjudicator's:

(1) Avoid having more than one rhyme on a secondary stress. Several words like *honesty-cloudily-hypocrisy* at the end of the line make for weakness.

(2) Have a break, not merely in the punctuation but actually in the logical trend, after the eighth line. Watts-Dunton likened the Petrarchan sonnet to a wave on a flowing tide — eight lines forward on the shore, and six in recession. Even if there be nothing corresponding to a wave-recession in the sestet, it is good to have a well-marked pause after the octave.

(3) Have, somewhere in the sonnet but preferably near the end, a polysyllabic word, for this tends to impart sonority and impressiveness.

(4) Avoid assonance in adjacent line-endings. Thus it is unideal to interlock a *raise-praise-phrase-days* set of rhymes with *sail-hail-fail-pale,* for all eight words have the same vowel-sound. The ideal rhyme-scheme holds in equipoise the opposite principles of maximum similarity with

maximum dissimilarity. You have maximum similarity in correct rhyming, and maximum dissimilarity may be achieved by giving to adjacent rhyme-sets as much mutual distinctiveness as possible.

These, however, are not "rules", and no sonnet in the competition was disqualified solely because it broke them. There may always be super-excellences which more than counterbalance nonconformities to the technical ideal.

VARIATION ON A THEME BY W. E. HENLEY

PAUL SELVER

This winter afternoon I, fasting and glum,
  Swathed as in cerements and limp with dope,
  Was trundled on a trolley down a slope
Which easily might lead to kingdom come.
They thrust me on a slab, wilting and numb,
  Beneath a fiendish glare. My dwindling scope
  Of vision glimpsed a figure in a cope,
Hovering nearer, eerily masked and dumb.
A dreamless, timeless trance engulfed me. Now
  In the drab, stifling ward I wake, at bay,
    Thirst-ridden, wincing and with limbs of lead.
Evening still lags. Too brief the respite. How
  I yearn for an elixir that could slay
    Awareness of the unending weeks ahead.

EVEREST

("Great things are done when men and mountains meet."—William Blake)

JOYCE EVELEGH

So men have come . . . from distant earth below
  Up to my dazzling cone, inviolate
  Till now: men who were fired to consecrate
Themselves, tempered like blades by ice and snow,
Girt with all aids that science can bestow.
  And I — inscrutable and obdurate —
  Granted them passage through my lone estate,
Taught them the wisdom only mountains know.
So we have met, these mountaineers and I.
  May they take back to other men my lore,
    Refresh the earth with snow their feet have trod,
Descend transfigured from my realms on high,
  The vanished need for solitude restore,
    And shout aloud the majesty of God.

PREMIUM COMPETITION: REPORT, NEW SERIES, No. 17

By THOMAS MOULT

If we are to judge present-day inclinations by the entries in our latest Premium Competition, the aspiring verse-writer is either content to use old poetic forms for old and already much-used themes, or he strives to be original in his choice of subject as well as in his method of expression. Only now and then do we meet with the work of one who takes a middle course. It is natural that the critic who is always searching for the poet who brings something fresh to poetry should feel most enthusiastic about the verses in which the subject — or maybe mood only — is fittingly expressed, however admirable he may think the motto "Nothing venture, nothing win." The sober yet brightly-coloured atmosphere invoked by Mrs. Celia Randall (Co. Down, Ireland) admirably balances a freely-written poem "Unison" and she has won the prize although any of three rival competitors nearly did so. They are W. R. Drake of Wirral, Cheshire ("Illumination"), Mrs. V. Charlwood Ross, Rottingdean, Sussex ("Then and Now"), and Miss Joan Forman, Bushey, Herts., ("I am Poor Prometheus"), each of whom must surely try again. So must many of the other entrants, because the majority reached an uncommonly good standard.

UNISON

CELIA RANDALL

Now is the coiled fern interpreting
The old language of the curved line of beauty,
The symbol scratched on the wall of the cave.
Now is the dove dawn revealing
The irridescent splendour of the palette,
The pigments that clothe mountains
Touch the colourless waters.
Here lifts the wind with priestlike hands
All the white passion of the cherry,
Here falls to upturned earth
The life-sustaining leaf.
Gather them to your heart,
Absorb them in the deep seas of your being,
Dove breast, and fern frond, and falling petal.
Now is the pen laid down, the mind quiet.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT PRIZE ANTHOLOGY

The Poetry Society is now able to announce a new Anthology of Prize Verse. Poets everywhere are invited to submit a Poem for possible inclusion.

The Editor of the Anthology is the President and Chairman of the Editorial Board. He will judge the quality of the various poems submitted in accordance with the terms of an Alice Hunt Bartlett bequest. The late Mrs. Bartlett, one-time American Editor of *The Poetry Review*, empowered her Executors to arrange for this Prize Competition open to Members of the Society.

1. All poems must be typewritten, with the author's name and address on the front page of the MS., along with a bracketed membership number. *This is important.*

2. No poet may submit more than two poems, any length up to 200 lines: any subject, any form. Poems published in *The Poetry Review* may also be drawn upon at the Editor's discretion.

3. Entries cannot be returned, so no stamp or addressed envelope is required. Enquiries will not be welcomed, nor is correspondence desired. The Editor's decision is final, and cannot be revealed to the individual competitor.

4. Every poet whose work is accepted will share the prize, the amount of which depends on circumstances prevailing at the time of the anthology's circulation.

5. Entries must be addressed: "The Editor, Alice Hunt Bartlett Anthology," 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Last day for submitted work: 31st May, 1954.

THE ALBERT RALPH KORN POETRY AWARD

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing that through the generosity of Mr. Albert Ralph Korn, of New York, a deep lover of poetry and a distinguished American, a new and substantial annual Award is offered to Members in any part of the world.

A prize of Twenty Pounds will be given for the best poem in English. It must be original, previously unpublished, and not longer than thirty-two lines. There is no restriction in the choice of subject and poetic form.

The judges will be appointed by The Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review*. One poem only must be submitted by any one poet, and all entries typewritten. The manuscript must be sent anonymously, with the author's name and address accompanying it in a sealed envelope. No MSS. can be returned. Closing date for the first year's award is extended to 30th June, 1954.

The outer envelope must be addressed to "Albert Ralph Korn Award, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1., England."

ORIOLE POETRY PRIZE

ORIOLE (The Poets Group of the Poetry Society) offer an annual prize of £5 each year for a given subject, any length. Competitors are required to adopt a pseudonym. This should be written in block capitals on the manuscript and also on a sealed envelope containing the entrant's name and address which must accompany every entry. No Competitor may enter more than one poem.

Subject for 1954: "Conversation Piece." Do not enclose stamps, MSS not returnable. Closing date 31st July, 1954. Address to: ORIOLE PRIZE, 33 Portman Square, W.1.

LILIAN BOWES LYON
POETRY AWARD

To honour the memory of the late Lilian Bowes Lyon it is The Poetry Society's privilege to invite the submission of original verse by Scottish poets anywhere in the world. Prizes of £5, £3, and £2 will be awarded annually for those poems considered most felicitous, and it is hoped that a selection from the entries may be read publicly.

No poem must exceed thirty lines: dialect is not barred, although the non-Scottish reader must be taken into consideration by the author — the judges will certainly do so — and the competitor's name and address must accompany the MS, but separately in a sealed envelope. Closing date for the second year's award is 30th June, 1954, and entries must be addressed to Prize Award (Lilian Bowes Lyon), The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, England.

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION

The above competition continues as before with the total entrance fees as prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired. (See Rule 3.)
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed "Premium Competition", *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize twice will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for the next Premium Competition will be 1st March, 1954.

THE LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS SONNET COMPETITION FOR 1954

The Poetry Society has the pleasure of announcing the fifth Annual Competition in memory of Lord Alfred Douglas for a sonnet upon any subject. One of the two forms adopted by Lord Alfred Douglas in his sonnets, must be used; these are:

For the Octave — 1, 2, 2, 1; 1, 2, 2, 1.

For the Sextet — 3, 4, 5; 3, 4, 5 *or* 3, 4; 3, 4; 3, 4.

The prize of £10, which is generously offered each year by the Marquess of Queensbury, may be divided at the discretion of the adjudicator. The winning poem or poems will be published with the award in *The Poetry Review*. Competitors must retain copies of their poems as these cannot be returned. The sonnets should bear a definite title and not merely marked "Sonnet". Not more than two sonnets may be submitted by each competitor by 30th June, 1954. Address "Sonnet Competition", The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Entries should bear names and addresses of competitors. No previously published poem may be entered.

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITIONS FOR 1954

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of £20 as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed "The Greenwood Prize", 33 Portman Square London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editorial Board, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*. Closing date is 31st August, 1954.

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MACDONALD

PORTMAN SQUARE — SHADE AND LIGHT

One of the most crowded meetings ever held in the Library at 33 Portman Square was in honour of the dead poet, Dylan Thomas. His sudden and tragic end in November left his widow and young children urgently in need, and The Poetry Society arranged a Memorial Reading so that we might, as John Graddon movingly said in his appeal for their support by the audience, "try to pay a fraction of the debt." The memorial fund, which will eventually be added to the larger official fund, remains open until early in the New Year, so that our members afield and abroad can contribute.

Louis Golding took the chair, and Tony Van den Bergh, assisted by Charles Doran, read many of Dylan Thomas's poems and his short story, *The Dress*. Some recordings made of the poet himself and lent by the B.B.C. were also heard — a particularly happy thought, since that richly coloured voice was so much a part of his magic.

The autumn opened very suitably with Our Own Poets, some reading in person; the President among them. A large audience gave a welcome for the first time at Portman Square to John Redwood Anderson, whose majestic poem "And the Wind Bloweth" was beautifully read by Gerik Schjelderup. Miss Chandler read for Dr. Marie Stopes, and William Kean Seymour did not forget satire in the shape of "Mr. Jellophat!" Mollie Hudson also contributed on his behalf her well-known skill of interpretation.

On the next Friday, we remembered Hilaire Belloc. Father Dom Ambrose Agius, O.S.B., who was in the chair, told us just those things which help to etch in memory a personality departed but not lost. Kelty MacLeod and Wilton Cole illustrated with feeling for the music and flair for the wit. Next, Howieson Culff and Marjorie Woodall (a pillar of the dramatic readings) gave a delightful anthology programme which ranged wide; and then, wider yet, Sir Eugen Millington-Drake roved through Africa, where he has lately conducted a cultural mission for the British Council. Introduced by Galloway Kyle, Sir Eugen read poems by natives of Rhodesia, Kenya, Mombasa, the Gold Coast — some white, some coloured, all with something to say of interest. In Africa, Sir Eugen acted as ambassador for English verse, thus accomplishing a very worthwhile liaison.

A full house attended Kennedy Williamson's splendid lecture on "Repetition as a Dramatic Device", his wide knowledge lending three- and four-fold examples. Dramatic readings are always popular, and two one-act plays by John M. Synge, together with a verse fantasy by the present writer (produced by George Wood) were presented with all the skill one has come to expect from any programme under Charles Doran's aegis. The array of broadcasting talent displayed was truly dazzling; a welcome visitor being Redvers Kyle, a temporary fugitive from the Third Programme.

Miss Mary Giles arranged a November programme with readers from the Ealing Circle. This provided an amusing hour of light and nonsense verse. Also in the same month, Miss Mollie Hudson and students from the Guildhall School of Music (how pleasant those young voices can be) offered a charming and varied reading the next week.

We have been honoured by the visits of notable "strangers". Two special lectures in mid-week, arranged by Sir Eugen Millington-Drake, brought us M. Raphael Barquissau, who was not only erudite but fascinating on "Les Themes de Baudelaire", while the Swedish Ambassador took the Chair for Dr. Johannes Edfelt, Sweden's distinguished poet, who, lecturing in England for the first time, discussed some trends in his country's poetry. Translations were read by Gerik Schjelderup and Charles Doran.

At a little ceremony during the season a gift from Miss Elsie M. Banister of a charming painting was accepted — and hung — by the Executive Council with acclamation. K.V.R.

ORIOLE POETS GROUP OF THE POETRY SOCIETY

Dedicated to furthering the work of active poets within the Society, the Oriole Group, meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month, "to hear each other's work and discuss the spirit and substance of poetry". All interested are invited to communicate with me at The Well House, Ewell, Surrey — LEIGH HENRY.

GEORGE RONALD

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POET'S PLEASURE

NEWS FROM THE CENTRES

By the Editorial Staff

Elementary, my dear Watson . . . elementary but much-needed advice to lecture-secretaries at our Centres:—

(1) Beg, borrow, or steal a glass of water beforehand for the lecturer. Don't let him have to ask for it. Commander Campbell suggests, in its absence, moistening the lower lip with the tongue. But what about the tongue?

(2) Arrange the lighting — or the table — so conveniently that he can see his notes at a glance.

(3) Next comes an old, old complaint. Chairmen, or some of them, still don't know how or when to sit down. They ought to practise in private.

(4) Don't keep the lecturer — and his reader — waiting for their part of the programme while a business meeting of the Centre is ended. Hold the business meeting afterwards. Not to make the lecturer feel unimportant is — well, important. Also, because he is human after all, he is glad of a little appreciative applause now and then. What about a cheer-leader? . . .

That's all for now. Except that *showmanship* is not to be despised, even at a poetry-gathering, for the sake of potential or new Centre members especially. Ensure for each of them a warm welcome in a brightened-up cosy room: as though they were even more important than the lecturer!

Before our Reports of progress at the Centres are presented we wish to ask if any member can spare a copy of *The Poetry Review,* No. 4, Volume 36, 1945? One of the American libraries is very anxious to obtain it — or, indeed, any or every issue round about the 1940-1945 period. At headquarters, 33 Portman Square, there is not a copy left of the fourth number in 1945. Being unable to afford to buy old copies, the General Secretary will be very grateful for gifts.

HAMPSTEAD

It is fitting that the first news of the season's activities up and down these islands — and overseas — should come from Hampstead, but for a sad reason. This Centre was the first to be established on behalf of The Poetry Society, and we are now mourning the loss of Miss E. Vaughan Jenkins, who has been the great inspiration there for many years. Miss Jenkins was one of the first members working in collaboration with Miss Huntsman the founder.

Our consolation is that Mrs. A. Malleson has become her successor. Anyone who is not already a member of the Hampstead Centre will be received gladly at 10 Gayton Crescent, N.W.3, on the first and third Thursdays (8 to 9.30) of the month.

KENSINGTON

Across London, in the not-so-far west, the Kensington Centre, with Miss Eileen Thorndike (sister of Dame Sybil) as President, has concluded what seems to us one of its most diverting as well as successful seasons. The send-off in late August was a production of *Wolf-Wolf!* described as "a non-advertisable tribute to the genius of the late Humbert Wolfe." A team of eight shared the readings of his poems, selected from *The Uncelestial City,* and after tea a further contribution was made by Irene Brent, always welcome everywhere, and her gifted pupil, Fiona Nicholls.

Later in the autumn Kathleen Raine read from her own poetry, which, incidentally, has won an Arts Council prize of £225 for a book of original verse by a living poet published 1951-1953. Other poets who read from their works included John Heath-Stubbs and W. A. B. Gardener: and Sally Anderson gave an evening of "very lovely singing" in Scots, English, and Italian. Alternating with the monthly Readings of the Centre are ten a year by the allied branch of the British Empire Shakespeare Society, now working through the Histories. A. V. Burbury, 12 Bassett Road, W.10, will gladly give information to anyone interested, and the Hon. Treasurer is Mrs. Patricia Gregory, 22 Chepstow Villas, W.11.

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WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE

"A very happy gathering". So Mrs. Elsie M. Gittens speaks of the September meeting at this popular Surrey Centre, when Dylan Thomas's work was discussed and read by Alexander Rolph, a local bookseller. Then, in November, Gavin Ewart, a poet whose work is included in Keidrych Rhys's anthology of *Poems from the Forces*, read his own work with "a charming modesty". Wilfrid Gibson, the distinguished veteran of the "Georgians", is the President of this Centre, and Mrs. Gittens's address as Hon. Secretary, is 28 Oatlands Drive, Weybridge. We offer our sympathy to Mrs. Gittens in her recent bereavement.

SUFFOLK

Ipswich is the town of assembly for this remarkably enthusiastic and constantly increasing Centre. The membership has passed the fifty mark — and not surprisingly when we consider the attractive programmes which Miss K. M. Turner, the Hon. Secretary (18 Willoughby Road, Ipswich), arranged for last summer and autumn. In July, for example, the members met at The Butt and Oyster, Pin Mill (delightful rendezvous for poets and the friends of poetry!) and the distinguished President of the Centre, Mr. Engleheart, gave a talk on verse-speaking. After tea the members read their own work.

In September, a "bumper meeting" was held at the President's home, Stoke Priory, Stoke-by-Nayland. Fifty member-guests were welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Engleheart in the beautiful drawing-room, and Mr. Stephen Potter, the well-known author and broadcaster, gave a talk on "Humour — the English Reflex."

The November meeting was held at the Crown and Anchor hotel, Ipswich, where a warm welcome was given to the President of the Poetry Society, Thomas Moult, who had given the first lecture at this Centre when it opened a year ago — or, rather, he "kicked off" as the Chairman put it, and Mr. Moult now claimed to be its centre-forward. The President read some of his own poems to illustrate his lecture on "My Life in Poetry," including the impressive "Brown Earth."

BELFAST

Also beyond the fifty-mark in membership has this Northern Ireland Centre travelled, and one of the most memorable autumns Miss Hettie Haddock has enjoyed in return for her hard work as hon. secretary was brought to an end triumphantly with a December recital by John Holgate. Members had looked forward with eager anticipation to his visit, especially those who remembered an earlier reading and talk of his to the Belfast Centre two years ago. "The times are rich indeed," writes the hon secretary in reporting this and the November meeting, when "a truly splendid reading of *The Trojan Women*, produced by Helen Shaw, was given in a choral setting. Miss Haddock adds her congratulations on the "magnificent work" accomplished at headquarters during the year.

The Meetings of the Belfast Centre are held every month in the Kensington Hotel, College Square. Following the programmes already mentioned — also a talk on Ezra Pound by the Rev. C. R. S. Breene — a "Personal Anthology" will be presented on 18th January by the Rev. Robert Crossett. 15th February is a junior members' night, 15th March will be devoted to a talk on the poetry of the Laureates (see "The Laurel Crown", an article in our next issue), and for 12th April Miss N. Ward has arranged a Reading of "Thor, with Angels", a verse-play by Christopher Fry, who seems to be a great favourite across the Irish Sea.

LEICESTER

The presidential address by Mr. Stewart C. Mason at the annual general meeting of this flourishing young Midland Centre must have been a great stimulus to his fellow members. What he said reads delightfully. He is Director of Education for the county, but he could not claim to be a man of letters, nor was he a man *with* letters except what he called a commonplace M.A. "Now if it had been A.M.I.C.E. it might have meant Anapaestic Maestro in Choreography and Elocution. The technicians have all the strings of mysterious letters." And when Mr. Mason went on to speak about "The Uses of Poetry" he could not resist adding to Enjoyment, Amusement, Self-Expression, Good Companionship, the scholastic use of it in Impositions. "The psychologists might probably tell us that the study of Hamlet for School Certificates had deprived society of tens of thousands of potential lovers of Shakespeare. But if this logic were pushed to an extreme it would mean that serious study of literature should be restricted to the worst! If the children were set to learn by heart each week the spiciest columns of the

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Gutter Press, this should automatically cause nausea and the children would turn with thankful hearts to *Paradise Regained!*"

This highly original presidential address crowned the proceedings which had begun with the re-election of Mr. P. A. W. Collins to the Chairmanship, and of Mr. D. Broughton and Mrs. T. W. Fowler as, respectively, secretary and treasurer. Mr. Broughton's address for inquiries is 18 Deepdale, Leicester: he has succeeded Mr. A. G. Richards, whose work in establishing this go-ahead Centre has been invaluable. As a tribute to him the July programme was devoted to his own poetry. The last fixture of the year 1953 was a lecture in December by the President of the Centre, Mr. Collins, on "How Poetry Gets Written".

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

An old friend and colleague of ours at headquarters, Mr. T. H. Foley, assisted by Miss Vivien Sewell, gave a Reading at High Wycombe in November. The programme for 1954 may be obtained from Mrs. Van den Bergh, Little Basing, Bray, Maidenhead.

BURGESS HILL

We hear encouraging reports of this Sussex Centre. There must be many in Hilaire Belloc's county who have still to know that poetry is studied, discussed, and read aloud on their own doorstep, so to speak, and they are invited to the meetings at F. G. Lambert's Corner House Restaurant, 45 Church Road, Burgess Hill on the second Saturday of the month at 3.15.

BRIGHTON AND HOVE

The President of the Poetry Society paid his first visit to this sea-breezy Centre in November, when he lectured on "My Life in Poetry". He promised that when he makes a return visit he will read some of his own work. Brighton is our only home of poetry where poets foregather literally within sight and sound of the sea. As a matter of fact the speakers and readers at their meetings can enjoy an uninterrupted view of the English Channel just over the heads of their audience (physically, not intellectually!) unless the afternoon is misty.

A seaside centre has its own special drawbacks, though. The Brighton and Hove president, Mr. P. E. Dunn, thinks that there are too many counter-attractions there except for the whole-hearted friends of poetry. Happily these ladies and gentlemen attend the monthly gatherings in force. For them enthusiasm means loyalty as well.

GUILDFORD

The Guildford Centre has held some very interesting and illuminating meetings. At the reading by Mollie Hudson this fine reader introduced a student of exceptional promise, Bess Jones. Their combined programme was entitled "T.S. Eliot and his Contemporaries," and Irene Brent followed with "Proud Heritage," an excellent survey of poetry ranging from the first Elizabeth to the Second. Mrs. Coker, 20 Litchfield Way, is the hon secretary, and she welcomes inquiries.

PITTSBURGH (U.S.A.)

Many a name in the world of American poetry stands for loyalty, and one of the best-known is that of Marie Tello Phillips, who has been a devoted enthusiast all her life and for nearly twenty years a leading member of the Poetry Society across the Atlantic. A frequent contributer to this journal, Mrs. Phillips is a member of the Pittsburgh Centre, Pennsylvania. Her influence is ever-widening — how many young people must have learnt through her vision what beauty is in the great chimneys of Pittsburgh! — indeed the whole of the great American continent has had the chance of sharing the lesson in her recent book, *Pittsburgh Saga,* and a dozen others, including novels. From one of Mrs. Phillips's fellow-workers we have received the following tribute:

"Thought you would be interested in the news of our beloved Marie Tello Phillips, who is your representative in Pittsburgh. Her unselfishness has inspired many writers in the Pittsburgh Centre and wherever she passes."

The news is that her husband has died. He was managing editor of three Pennsylvania newspapers. He was also a devoted worker in good causes. The Poetry Society has expressed the deepest sympathy. He will always be her inspiration, as she will be to many others for, we hope, many years more.

ST. PETERSBURG (U.S.A.)

Gratification expressed in generous terms has come again from this Florida Centre for the encouragement given in *The Poetry Review* to American participants in our many

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prize competitions. The President of this group is Mrs. Helen T. D. Robinson, 815 Jackson Street North, St. Petersburg 6, Florida. One member has recently shown with much pride to her fellow-members her treasured copy of *The Poetry Review* published in 1917!

BOSTON (U.S.A.)

The twenty-sixth season of this old, ever-young Centre was opened with poetry and good memories. Miss Eleanor Curtis read her own poems, and the poet-actress Dorothy Quincey — well-known in her own country — gave her reminiscences of the theatre. She acted with James K. Hackett, who starred in London with Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Miss Blanche T. Bigelow, the Centre secretary (163 Eliot Street, Milton 87, Mass.), is looking forward this winter to a big increase in membership.

* * *

And now it only remains for the Editorial Staff to wish a happy and prosperous New Year at all our Centres, home and away, including the following:

BRONDESBURY:—Readings on the first Sunday of each month at 1 Mowbray Road, N.W.6, at 4 p.m. Details from Miss Silvia Newton, L.R.A.M., at the above address — Telephone: WIL 6405.

CHELSEA POETRY CIRCLE (Affiliated to The Poetry Society):—Hon. Secretary, 5 Redesdale Street, Chelsea, S.W.3.

CHICAGO (U.S.A.):—*President:* Ruth Crary Clough, St. Clair Hotel, Chicago 11, Ill., U.S.A.

DUMFRIES:—Mr. Irving Miller, 35 George Street, Dumfries, will answer all enquiries.

FLORIDA (U.S.A.):—*President General:* Marie Tello Phillips, 6427 Darlington Road, Pittsburgh 17, PA., U.S.A.

GLOUCESTER:—Miss Katharine N. James, 4 Beaufort Buildings, Gloucester. Tel. 23657.

HASTINGS, BEXHILL AND DISTRICT:—I. K. Bateman, Esq., Ochiltree House, Hastings.

MANCHESTER:—Enquiries to the Secretary, Mrs. B. Sterling, 25 June Street, Manchester, 13. Meetings at Fearnley House, 3 St. Ann's Churchyard, Manchester, the third Wednesday in each month at 6.30 p.m.

NOTTINGHAM:—Enquiries should be sent to Mrs. M. Riley, 20 Medina Drive, Tollerton, Nottingham.

NOVA SCOTIA (CANADA):—Enquiries to Mrs. Borden Haverstock, 12 Ogilvie Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

REIGATE:—Meetings monthly at The Alton, Alma Road, Reigate. Enquiries to Mrs. M. A. Hicks.

SHEFFIELD:—Enquiries to Miss F. G. Stimpson, 23 Silver Hill Road, Sheffield 11. Meetings: Grand Hotel, monthly.

STROUD:—Hon. Secretary, Miss Mary Martyn, Sunfold, Rodborough Common, near Stroud.

TORONTO (CANADA):—All enquiries to Mr. Thos. G. Ballantyne of Apartment 2, 101 Bernard Avenue, Toronto. Telephone: M.I. 2976.

CALLING ALL MEMBERS

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing a Get-Together luncheon in London for members and their guests on Saturday, 8th May. Further particulars in our next issue. Please reserve the date.

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Prelude — Flowers for the Living	67
A Curiosity of Literature	70
An Autograph Poem by Charles Dickens	71
Counsels to a Young Poet, Herbert Palmer	72
Three Poems, Louis Golding	74
All Passion Spent, John Redwood Anderson	76
Of Edmund Blunden, Evelyn D. Bangay	77
Ov' E Beatrice, W. A. B. Gardener	77
To a Girl Looking at a Painting, Michael Ivens	78
Some Post-War Poets: Appreciation, by F. Pratt Green	79
"Cast My Delight . . .", Monica Pritchett	83
The Poet and the Undertaker, John Graddon	84
The Notched Beam, Margaret Stanley-Wrench	85
Song of an Old Man, Dannie Abse	86
To a Mother, John Lucas	86
Nativity, Alan Barnsley	87
Love among the Ruins, Richard O'Donoghue	88
Moon, Dudley G. Davies	88
"White Noise" — "Green Silence", Kennedy Williamson	89
Exodus, Ellen E. H. Collins	91
Horsemen in the Park, Leslie Daiken	92
Cotswold Country, Thea Hunt	93
The Poem that Influenced Me, by L. A. G. Strong, Phoebe Hesketh, Kenneth Hare, F. L. Lucas	94
"Dear Editors — ", Herbert Palmer and others	97
Scots Who Have, by Stephen Graham	99
Fruits of the Spirit, by K. V. Richardson	100
Green Fields, by E. D. Bangay	102
Let Us Give Thanks, by John Graddon	103
Halcyon in the Ravens' Nest, by P. D. Cummins	104

The New Orthodoxies, by Robert Armstrong 105
Root and Flower, by Geoffrey Johnson 106
Helen, by Elaine Weston 106
Poetry Books Galore, by the Editorial Staff 107
The Ballad, by E. V. Knox 110
The Ballad of the Mares (Oriole Award), R. John Portchmouth 112
Premium Competition Award, by Robert Armstrong 115
Hazards, Edith Roseveare 116
Alice Hunt Bartlett Prize Anthology 117
The Albert Ralph Korn Poetry Competition 117
Lilian Bowes Lyon Poetry Competition 117
Oriole Poetry Prize Competition 119
Three Competitions 119
Portman Square — Happy New Year 121
Poet's Pleasure: News from the Centres 123

TO WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTORS

1. All MSS must have the name and the address of the author stated in the top left-hand corner of the first page. If he is a member of the Society a bracketed M should be added.
2. One side only of the paper must be used.
3. Reasonable margins and top space should be left.
4. A self-addressed envelope must always be enclosed either stamped or, if an overseas contributor, the Coupon-Response International. Otherwise, no MSS will be considered. Loose stamps cannot be regarded as a substitute. Except in rare instances an introductory letter is not necessary.
5. In their own interest writers should notice that poems over thirty lines in length have a very doubtful chance of acceptance.
6. If helpful editorial suggestions are made with a returned MS, please do not reply challenging the advice. Requests for criticism, moreover, are not invited. It should be remembered that The Poetry Society already has a well-organized service for expert advice, as announced in each issue.
7. Not more than four poems should be submitted at one time. Two is an ideal number.
8. The Editorial Board does not accept responsibility for the safe custody and return of any unsolicited MSS. Authors are requested not to write expressing anxiety lest their MS is lost in the post. MSS are seldom or never lost in the post.
9. Acceptance or rejection of a MS cannot reasonably be expected until at least three months have elapsed. A decision may take longer. Inquiries by telephone cannot be dealt with.
10. The receipt of a proof does not necessarily imply immediate publication.

Next Issue—

"UNDER MILK WOOD" YES and NO

JOHN BAYLISS, DANNY ABSE, and Other Young Poets

"MYSTERY POEM FOUND IN A BOTTLE"

These pages — An Offering to

EDMUND BLUNDEN

"I am all contentment, never a presage lours
On my delicious pastures"

Prelude . . .

FLOWERS FOR THE LIVING

The age we live in has been given, rather prematurely we think, various names to characterize it — the Atomic Age, the Age of the Slow-Combustion Engine, the Machine Age, the Age of Fear, Hate, Inhumanity, Humbug . . . and the Age that is the Half-Wit's Paradise. We can make our own choice according to taste, as Mrs. Beeton used to say, and any of them might seem justifiable if our method is to argue (mistakenly) from the particular to the general, instead of (correctly) the other way round.

Whatever our choice may be, the fact remains that in the world of Art and Culture an American poet of renown and high distinction, Maxwell Bodenheim, recently stabbed to death, had been for a long time a sad figure in the New York streets and taverns, bearing a beggar's card "I am Blind" to save himself from starvation — a desperate device, because the people acquainted with him knew that he was not blind at all. And another poet, an Englishman whose name in fairness to him we keep to ourselves, has gone abroad for good, the explanation, in so many words, being that he believes his country has no use for him.

* * *

A poignant little poem by Mary Webb, who, as a novelist, wrote *Precious Bane*, describes how "they brought flowers" to an old woman — "around her head and feet they heap more flowers than she in all her days possessed." She had said while living: "Posies aren't for me, they cost too much."

Yet now she sleeps in them, and cannot see
Or smell or touch.

One red rose while she lived would have been good. Flowers for the living — recognition for a poet, sufficient recognition to enable him, having proved himself, to go on working at his art . . . Should not this be the ideal and practical aim of those who possess the material equipment for "patronage" and are proudly grateful for Poetry, the supreme English heritage?

We have seen cultural organizations heaping flowers on a dead poet, whose name is not even mentioned in one of their anthologies, published even as he died: a leading national newspaper showing concern that he had left his family in need — and yet only once in months does that newspaper print the work of a living poet.

* * *

It is not necessary to dwell on the inequality of the recognition given by the Arts Council of Great Britain to the various cultural movements. The comparative grants to Music, Opera, Ballet, Drama, Painting, and Poetry were quoted in our last issue from the Annual Report of the Council. But we have received intimations from our Centres that they are in complete agreement with our implied protest. And the Derby Poetry Circle, while expressing appreciation of the financial help received on more than one occasion in their efforts to foster the love of Poetry in an industrial district ("We think that results have amply justified this support"), are convinced that "more can be done, particularly in the encouragement of individual writers as in the Festival of Britain competition, 1951."

"Surely," they add, "Poetry, 'the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge,' deserves at least equal (proportionate) encouragement to that given to the Arts other than Poetry."

* * *

To everything that has just been written we hasten to add our deep appreciation of Mr. W. Foyle's munificent patronage which, keeping an individual tradition alive almost on its own, takes the form, year after year, of a William Foyle Poetry Prize, amounting to £250. This year it has been won by Mr. Walter de la Mare for his *O Lovely England,* a collection of poems (Faber, 10s. 6d.) reviewed in our last number. At the literary luncheon during which the presentation was made — to Mr. Richard de la Mare in his father's absence — Mr. Alfred Noyes and Miss Margaret Rawlings were the principal speakers.

Reporting the occasion *The Manchester Guardian* printed felicitous words about them both. Miss Rawlings, a member of The Executive Council of The Poetry Society, is "the actress whose love for the poet's work was fostered in childhood by her mother and has been passed on to her ten-year-old daughter. Miss Rawlings is one of our best readers of poetry." Mr. Noyes also has a link with The Poetry Society. His brother-in-law (Mr. Engleheart) is Chairman of the Suffolk Centre. Mr. Noyes has promised this journal an essay on Music in Poetry.

* * *

Please turn now to Page 115 . . .

* * *

If ever a poet has been truly English in his work it is Edmund Blunden, and proof is to be found in all his verse and prose that has followed the paper-covered booklet, *Pastoral,* which, appearing before the end of the

first World-War, is now a collector's piece. During a Brains Trust the other Friday at The Poetry Society's rooms the question was asked which poem of the past ten years did the Panel think would be remembered a century hence. Reflection prompts the belief that, by its simplicity, universality, and lyricism, any one of a dozen by Blunden — say "One Among the Roses" — has qualified:—

I wondered much at the great grace which fashioned your clear rosy face
After the myriads gone before, a beauty new and now supreme.

The quotation accompanying our Dedication of this number to Edmund Blunden is taken from his writings. Another of the "Where is it?" competitions recently inaugurated arises out of this "offering". Readers are invited to give — on postcards only, marked "Dedication, The Poetry Review, 33 Portman Square, London W.1." — the source of the quotation under the poet's name, and the first three correct cards received by 30th April will each receive a set of six of The Poetry Society's Broadsheets, advertised in this issue. The quotation from John Masefield's poetry (see our previous competition) will be found in "Biography".

* * *

Have you turned to Page 115? . . .

* * *

To welcome news of achievement by individual members of The Poetry Society is always a pleasure. The Rev. F. Pratt Green and P. E. Dunn have been informed by the editors of the P.E.N. Anthology, 1954, that poems of theirs are accepted for inclusion. And in the July-September number of *The Poetry Review* we hope to publish reviews of new books by two of our frequent contributors — Madge Hales, of the Nottingham Centre, and the evergreen and scholarly Howard Parsons, of Hove.

From these items of personal news it can well be understood how greatly interested we of The Editorial Board have been in the recent inauguration of the Poetry Book Society. Every volume of verse issuing from the publishers will be considered for recommendation to the Book Society's subscribers, and a periodical "choice" made in accordance with the usual practice of these "book clubs". We wish the new organization well.

* * *

Postscripts. — Robert Gittings, whose critical study of Keats's poetry *The Living Year* has been enthusiastically received by the critics, was our Greenwood Prize winner in 1949 . . . The Poetry Society's contribution to the Mayor of Swansea's Fund in memory of Dylan Thomas has been gratefully acknowledged . . . Yorke Crompton, a member of our Executive Council is now in Pakistan on a Goodwill Mission . . . Edgell Rickword, poet and editor, author of a volume of poems and a *Life of Rimbaud,* has been appointed manager of Collet's Hampstead Bookshop, London . . .

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

"WHERE'S THE GREAT POET?"—
A CURIOSITY OF LITERATURE

"Where's the great poet, I want to see the great poet!" The speaker, a Governor of Genoa long, long ago, meant Charles Dickens, then on holiday in Italy. Dickens must have been rather pleased to hear that someone had so described him. All famous men, it has been said, secretly cherish an ambition other than that which the Almighty endowed them with the power to achieve, and when Charles Dickens was a young man he wished for success not only as an actor and author of books, but as a writer of verse for musical comedies and comic operas. Even while he was writing *Sketches by Boz* and *The Pickwick Papers* he devoted much of his energy to a "comic burletta" entitled *The Village Coquettes,* produced at the St. James's Theatre, London, in 1836. He was obviously proud of the achievement, because when an admiring young lady begged him to contribute something to her album he copied out for her one of the songs. Act 1, scene 2, opens with a melancholy gentleman, George Edmunds, delivering himself thus:

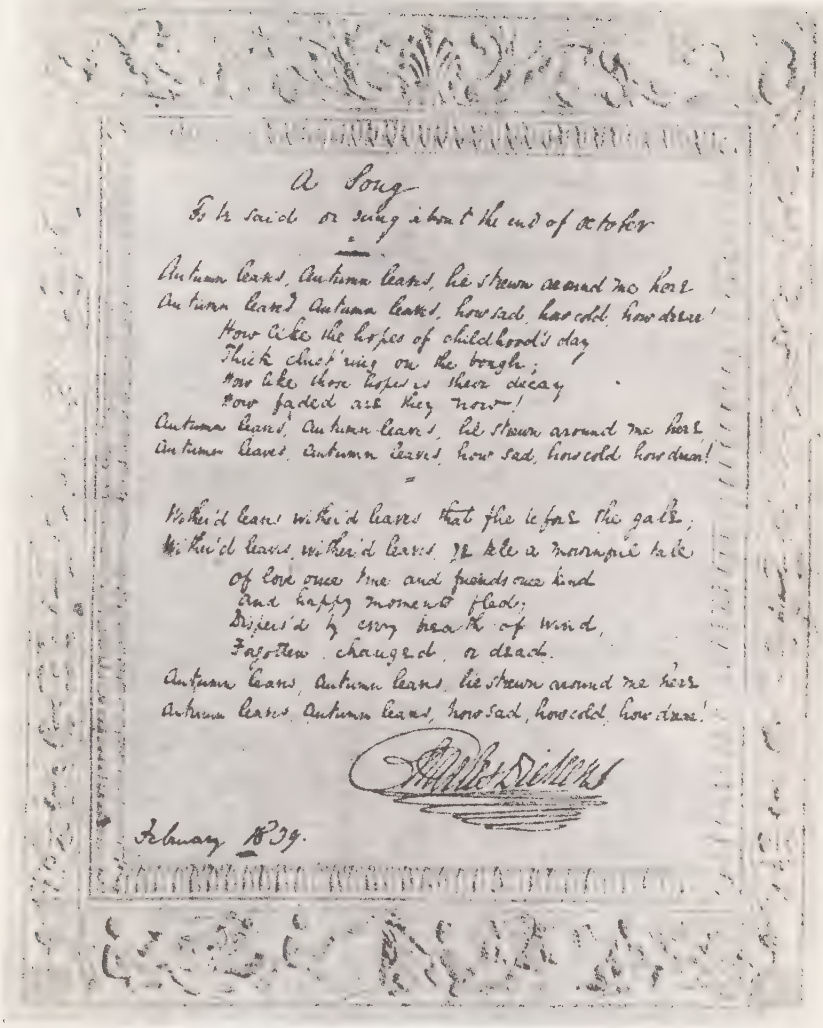
"How thickly the fallen leaves lie scattered at the feet of those old elm-trees! When I first met Lucy on this spot, it was a fine spring day, and those same leaves were trembling in the sunshine, as green and bright as if their beauty would last for ever. What a contrast they present now, and how true an emblem of my own lost happiness."

Then follows the "Song — George Edmunds":

Autumn leaves, Autumn leaves, lie strewn around me here;
Autumn leaves, Autumn leaves, how sad, how cold, how drear!
How like the hopes of childhood's day
Thick-clust'ring on the bough:
How like those hopes in their decay,
How faded are they now!
Autumn leaves, Autumn leaves, lie strewn around me here;
Autumn leaves, Autumn leaves, how sad, how cold, how drear!

Wither'd leaves, wither'd leaves, that fly before the gale:
Wither'd leaves, wither'd leaves, ye tell a mournful tale
Of love once true and friends once kind
And happy moments fled;
Dispers'd by every breath of wind,
Forgotten, changed, or dead.
Autumn leaves, Autumn leaves, lie strewn around me here:
Autumn leaves, Autumn leaves, how sad, how cold, how drear!

This autograph poem is reproduced on the opposite page (by kind permission of Constable and Co.) — as a literary curiosity. Had it been written to-day, instead of 120 years since, we doubt if any serious anthology of poetry would have been graced by its inclusion.



A Song
To be said or sung about the end of October

Autumn leaves, Autumn leaves, lie strewn around me here
Autumn leaves, Autumn leaves, how sad, how cold, how drear!
How like the hopes of childhood's day
Thick clust'ring on the bough;
How like those hopes is their decay
How faded are they now!
Autumn leaves, Autumn leaves, lie strewn around me here
Autumn leaves, Autumn leaves, how sad, how cold, how drear!

Wither'd leaves, wither'd leaves, that flee before the gale,
Wither'd leaves, wither'd leaves, ye tell a mournful tale
Of love once true and friends once kind
And happy moments fled;
Dispers'd by every breath of wind,
Forgotten, changed, or dead.
Autumn leaves, Autumn leaves, lie strewn around me here
Autumn leaves, Autumn leaves, how sad, how cold, how drear!

Charles Dickens

February 1829.

AN AUTOGRAPH POEM BY CHARLES DICKENS

COUNSELS TO A YOUNG POET

HERBERT PALMER

Lean to the warming fire, and listen, friend,
My turn to tell you of the star to follow.
O, give not stones for bread, nor straw for wheat,
And weave not that false fabric on your loom!

When you write verse you're reaching for a poem,
Words musical and strong to hold the ears,
Dress that is worthy of the Thought it utters;
Yes, yes, the dress, she's tired of wearing sackcloth,
So dress and thought must cease their horsehair quarrel.

Let it be silk or linen, or best wool, Sir,
All firmly woven with fine fastenings to it —
Jewels, for choice, but each to suit the garment.
You see that long robe there — it is but fustian,
And the gold buttons and the silver claspings
Seem raiment's mockery, laughter's eyes to scathe it.
Yon's only prose at masquerade, less worthy
Than honourable prose to stroke Olympus.
The city slums for such a coarse apparel —
Not made for any mansion-nurtured body.

For what's beneath all words of shining singing?
Is it not body and the soul it utters —
The soul within the body, soul and body —
That make the raiment worthy of beholding.
See to it that the body wed the soul, Sir,
And both wed fitting raiment, like the feathers
That fold the bird, or fur its four-foot fellow.
Is it not so? And does not perfect raiment
On gracious lady colour all her goings?

The gift of speech is godlike. Man was given
Words to reveal his thought and muffled heart-beats,
And thus uplift him over all Creation.
But now some stammerers hint that Truth spells Falsehood:

To Man came words that he might cloud his thinking
And cloak his heartbeats — that's the wars' blind ravage —
Then, soul-defeated, turn his towers to dungeons.
Obscure and darken, twist, pervert and harden! —
Watch the mad frolic at the Muse's table!
Is that the way the world must get her ending?
Or is it worse? Are those Hell's songs we hear, Sir?

Think of Greek radiance, think of Hebrew lightning,
Think of the Roman Vergil, Shakespeare, Milton.
Think of all poets who raised a torch in darkness.
Think, read, and learn, and listen to their ardours,
March in their steps; then if your Thought be Vision
Your song may be a new song, wing'd and shining,
Song for the Age, a brightly risen phoenix,
Song to outlast the Age when custom hardens.

So when you make a poem let there be Passion,
That wind which blows aside Life's dulling curtains;
And if she be not with you, wait her coming:
Then let the words skip, dance, or march in column,
Or rave and rocket, whirl and leap to thunder.
Set free each strong device of colour and form, Sir —
Assonance, metaphor, rhyme, alliteration.
Let there be singing and the strings of singing,
Let there be ease and light and captivation,
A lure of sound, and not a slow dark stumble,
A lure of thought, and not rebuff in thinking,
A jewel of thought to set in God's high altar,
A banner of wit to fly on Wisdom's steeple,
A hammer of flame to plague the soul's abasement.
Let there be light till all the stars seem snowing.

Let the words flow, firm fingers on the fabric;
Observe the end, and then, if more be needed,
Insert, delete, bring scissors to frayed edges.
Let there be rule in passion, law in inspiration,
Metre in rhythm, shape in variation,
Meaning in symbol, sense in each sensation.
So shall you make a poem to lift your spirit
And be to some a beacon in Life's darkness.

THREE POEMS

LOUIS GOLDING

RETURN

When I come back from the southern countries,
The austere terrible countries,
  Always the sense of England recurs
As a wide greenness, a wash of bird-song,
That contract as my heart folds round upon them
  To one green branch that a white throat stirs.

They have their splendor, the southern countries,
Of proud crags and peerless waters,
  For those are the places where the Greeks have been.
They have the kingly arts of landscape;
It is the slight sweet arts they fail in —
  The singing bird and the branch green.

CALABRIAN WINE

Having drunk wine, the poems, the countless poems
  I have written in sober moods
Seem so stale, so flat, so unprofitable
  As birdless and leafless woods.

Having drunk wine, I can sing of Aspromonte,
  Which lies above me now, gashed with crude scars,
As a most amazing country where the moon is flowers
  And thistles crack with stars.

Here no unexciting alluvial deposit
  Of loose gravel and dissolute clay
Clothes the landscape. Jasper and chalcedony
  Encrust the traveller's way.

No ordinary beasts on their dull duties
  Pad there on listless paws,
But only salamanders and tusky mantichores
  Investigate the First Cause.

If you too come, as I came, to Calabria
  And drink Calabrian wine,
For you also the road will be porphory
  And mantichores' eyes shine.

But it were better you had stayed in your garden suburb,
  Sir Clergyman and Novelist Miss,
If you drink milk or mineral water
  In a wine's land like this.

We shall have no room for you, I and Aspromonte,
  For whom wine and war ring loud,
We that are locked in desperate encounters
  Aloof beyond hawk and cloud!

There the salamander no more flickers
  Nor the mantichore runs his race,
Where I and Aspromonte, poet and mountain,
  Are brought face to face.

And who shall prevail, mountain or poet,
  Who knows? Not he nor I.
But the victor shall build for his foe worthily
  A sarcophagus of lazuline sky.

SICILY AND ENGLAND

Green, green is England,
Emerald green and green jade.
  Her hills and coasts are sea vapor,
  Her trees are green thoughts that taper,
Her sunlight a green shade.
Green, green is England.
  There the quiet thoughts pass
Out of root to stalk and blossom,
  Like flowering grass.

White flame is Sicily,
  Whether cypresses like torches
In the breathless air burn;
Whether hot mountain scorches
  Foot, heart, until they turn
  Into flame like all of these —
Cypress of Sicily, mountain of Sicily.
  And her burning seas.

ALL PASSION SPENT

JOHN REDWOOD ANDERSON

All passion spent! Yet what a joyous tide
Sweeps through the singing ocean of my soul:
Troughs of deep self-abasement, crest of pride
On towering crest of pride — billows that roll
On and still on
Under the morning sun,
To break at last, with far-reëchoing roar,
In shining foam and leaping spray
Upon the tranquil coasts of day.
For passion, that itself destroys,
Begets in its destruction these tumultuous joys,
As the capped waves exult upon the sea's blue floor
After the wind has died away.

And yet 'tis but the surface of my being
That is so broken into joyous motion;
While down in my profounder ocean,
Beyond all knowing, hearing, seeing,
Dumb to all question, to all insight blind,
Beyond the utmost soundings of the mind,
There are no peaks nor hollows of emotion,
No humbleness, no pride,
Nor any movement of the tide:
There, in the dark abysses of my sea,
Silence and hushed mystery
Unfathomably abide.

For love is not by thought defined,
Nor by emotion circumscribed,
Nor by the sudden passions bribed;
Love is of knowledge and of steadfast will
Self-dedicated to a chosen life,
Not at the beck and call of fate,
Not to our veering weathers subjugate,
But, under joy and pain, and peace and strife,
Dwells consecrate,
Immutable and still.

OF EDMUND BLUNDEN

EVELYN D. BANGAY

He does not tell of Thracian courts and kings,
Nor much of people, save in humble days,
He goes about our quiet country ways
And holds in dearness all the gentle things
We also cherish: young untutored wings,
Old barns, trees' rind, sprigged green, and sets ablaze
With words the streams we lamely underpraise.
We stand and stammer: he comes by and sings.

Though we are straitly moved by classic wrongs
And loves re-vitalized in time-old tales,
They are more live and sweet, the present songs;
Better than legendary nightingales,
Between each silence, after dulling rain,
To hear the high-poised thrush sing clear again.

OV' E BEATRICE?

W. A. B. GARDENER

The dryads are summering on shady hills,
uplands where the sun, filtered through beech leaves,
checked by oak, and patterned by wild-apple,
colours the dancing bodies with fleet-foot light
as a wind varies the sheen of the bending corn;

such wind as, subdued by the scattered trees
to a bow and a glide round the trunks, and through
the glades where flowers of lime hang scenting the air,
touches in passing the petal-bright flesh
as their comrades' hands might, drawn in caress.

Ah, if my love were among them, she would not be
less fair than they, the eternal fair;
her voice would chime as sweetly, her laugh as gay;
and I should not see dryad or hill
nor rooted oak, not the sun itself, for light.

TO A GIRL LOOKING AT A PAINTING

MICHAEL IVENS

Her eyes, roaming the canvas,
Searched in vain
For a bright and hidden flame
That burned and cast a golden light
From out of the heart of the sullen paint.

But the vision the artist had seen
And the passion the artist had felt
Clung to his eye and his heart
While his poor, hapless brush
Went wandering about its task
Aimless as a man without a memory.

Yet,
As a fool is the reason for wisdom in others,
And a cold woman the cause of love in a man,
As the too hasty plunge of a kingfisher
Brings a flash of dazzling blue among the reeds,
So this artist had failed,
And yet his work was not in vain.

For the eyes of the girl
(On which mine chanced to rest)
Looked out and searched
For the vision of beauty that lay within.
She pursued herself;
The hunter was the hunted
And the fearful boar
Revealed the fleeting grace of the hound.

I moved back a pace
And she was in my picture.
She searched for that which she possessed
And searched in vain;
My eyes found the prize
And the girl and the painting and the light in her eyes
Were held in a frame of tenderness.

SOME POST-WAR POETS — APPRECIATION

By F. PRATT GREEN

The wit who said: "Nowadays only poets read poetry and even they read only their own," was near enough the truth to score a hit, the truth probably being that more people are writing poetry than buying it. It is no secret that at a time when few papers and periodicals give space to poetry, when publishers complain they cannot sell it, and poetry magazines wink out like bubbles, no less than 10,000 poems were submitted to the editors of *New Poems, 1954,* representing, one supposes, at least a thousand poets! The struggle for recognition, under such conditions, must be severe.

This question of recognition is worth pondering. A poet, unless he is as odd a creature as Emily Dickinson, hopes for recognition because poetry is a communication of experience; he needs a public to share the experience, to stimulate him, to criticize him. If he fails to gain recognition, he may be tempted to lower his aesthetic standards, or retire to an ivory tower, or express himself in some other, and less frustrating, medium. Recognition, on the other hand, confirms him in his vocation and thereby fortifies him in the task of fulfilling it. Not that success alone is evidence of genuine talent; luck and influence play too large a part in what a friend of mine calls "this poetry racket" for success to be the criterion.

Now the war, and its continuing effect on publishing, delayed recognition for some poets who are at last finding their public. A new poet, for this reason, may be a man of thirty-five. He arrives, so to speak, with the poet of twenty-five, who has not been kept waiting in the cold. Among the older poets who have won recognition since the war we may mention Charles Causley, Robert Conquest, Ursula Wood, Rob Lyle, Michael Hamburger, Kingsley Amis, James Kirkup, John Wain, Dannie Abse, David Wright, and even then we should leave out a dozen others worthy of a place; among the younger poets we would specially commend Charles Higham and Thom Gunn. It is noteworthy that all these poets have in common a capacity to write freshly within the tradition and a distaste for mystification and obscurity. The period of intense experimentation would seem to have ended and its lessons to have been assimilated. But it will be some time before those who ceased to read poetry in the experimental period discover that the rough places are once more being made plain.

My concern in this brief survey, however, is with four post-war poets, as yet unnamed by me, whose work strikes me as having exceptional significance and interest — D. J. Enright and Thomas Blackburn from

the older group, Elizabeth Jennings and W. S. Merwin from the younger.

Those who boast that modern poetry is obscure and tedious should get to know D. J. Enright, who has that gift of vivid description, and that sense of form, which make for immediate enjoyment. Rarely abstract, he is stimulated by a thousand-and-one things in the visible world — by a chicken's leg in the choked gutter of an Alexandrian street, by darkness at noon at Birmingham, by a famous Japanese picture, by the Casino at Monte Carlo. He is as effective describing people (in "Black Country Women"):

> Did they burn in their men's furnaces — old women
> Whose tired hair coils like cowed and dropping smoke,
> All shades of grey about their burnt-out skulls?—

as places ("The 'Black' Country"):

> True, how can it be called "Black"? — with its shining cubes of
> metallic branch-groceries,
> And the tin gleam of the fish saloon, tiled like a public lavatory,
> Where the fried fish floats, in Sargasso seas of chips.

Enright, it will be observed, has no inhibitions about words. In the same poem he can be "poetical" — "Funereal lorries pace the sibilant lanes" — and "unpoetical" — "Seduced by television the gay rakes baby-sat" — and yet preserve unity of tone and the veiled seriousness of the poem.

It must not be imagined that Enright is superficial. Although he rarely philosophizes, he constantly invites us to explore the deeper meanings of his deceptive simple statements such as this, in "The Image":

> The passing draught bites at you, and the ash encumbers:
> yet you may quietly number
> Tall chimneys as they fall.

And tribute should be paid to his technical skill, his fine control over long lines, never allowed to sag, his ability to vary the sounds and pace of his verse so that it gives us the greatest pleasure when read aloud. In "Life and Letters" he lets us into his secret:

> Which is why I write lucidly, that even I
> Can understand it — and mildly, being loth to face
> the fashionable terrors,
> Or venture among sinister symbols . . .
> . . . it is unthinkable
> To drink horror from ink, to sink into the darkness of
> words —
> Words one has chosen oneself. Poems, at least,
> Ought not to be phantoms.

Thomas Blackburn is a poet who might be accused of venturing among sinister symbols and sinking into the darkness of words! He has been labelled a Neo-Decadent. It is true that sex is a dominant theme, that he

is obsessed with evil and guilt, and haunted by death; but instead of the "lilies and langours" of the verse of the "Naughty Nineties" one senses the virility of a man who wrestles with the eternal until the breaking of the day, for whom the eternal has become carnal. A reviewer dubbed Blackburn's poetry "unexciting", an extraordinary judgement to those of us who find it electrifying, as though written with a man's nerves, by a man possessed. Perhaps the truth is that he attracts or repels; that, like Baudelaire, he is destined to arouse sharp divergence of opinion.

His is the poetry of the inner world, mysterious and visionary, but surprisingly concrete. For instance, he writes in "Intimations" of an unborn child:

> Day by day
> Organs, which have no meaning in the void,
> Grow large and shout its gentle night away,
> Feet craving distances, his eyes to read
> A sunlit scripture, and the nostrils, air,
> Find nothing that's according to their need,
> And since they are their context, know despair.

It is this concreteness of vision which gives a terrifying reality to the myths he uses in such a poem as "Pasiphae":

> And then they find her; she can't speak at all,
> Giggles and points her tongue, she plays bo-peep
> Crawls crab-like on the earth, begins to weep,
> Blasted and burnt out like a terminal.

To appreciate Thomas Blackburn, and poets of his type, one must remember that for them images are not instruments of a poetic purpose but, so to speak, a mode of being, or, as Blackburn himself puts it, "the language of that other dimension which is within us and beyond us". Emerging from the depths, the poet speaks to us in the only language now natural to him, in images. To some he will seem to be "sinking into the darkness of words"; to others he will be an interpreter of our own darkness, the most exciting type of poet.

Elizabeth Jennings does not write out of her subconscious, or unconscious, in this way; she is not possessed by her daemon. On the contrary, she patiently and honestly analyses her experience, selects her images with care, controls her poetic material with a cool hand. The effect at times is a little dry and bare, even prosaic, as in the opening of her now familiar poem "Identity":

> When I decide I shall assemble you
> Or, more precisely, when I decide which thoughts
> Of mine about you fit most easily together,
> Then I can learn what I have loved, what lets
> Light through the mind. The residue
> Of what you may be goes.

This poet, plainly, does not indulge her emotions; she brings to that inner world in which she also is interested a psychological insight of another kind. Her calm probing, however, is so delicately done that nothing is lost in the process. There is warmth even in her dryness, an absence of cynicism, even of irony. So the poem ends:

> That you love what is truthful to your will
> Is all that ever can be answered for
> And, what is more
> Is all we make each other when we love.

But she rarely writes as drily as this. She can use the image, and the extended image (somewhat in the manner of Edwin Muir), with brilliance. And what a gift she has for achieving the quiet and arresting climax, as in "Bell-Ringer":

> And men look up as if the air were full
> Of birds descending, bells exclaiming in
> His hands but shouting wider than his will.

Critics have called her work "unpretentious". So, in a sense, it is; but look more closely and you will see how appropriately she dresses for each occasion, look still more closely and you will see that her sparing use of ornament argues no lack of style. She is the kind of poet we shall read with increasing delight.

W. S. Merwin, an American settled in England, has an established reputation in several fields of literature although he is only in his middle twenties. With two books of verse to his credit, he expects shortly to complete his third, for which purpose he holds the Kenyon Review Fellowship in Poetry for 1954.

His use of language often resembles that of Elizabeth Jennings, as in these lines from "The Mountain":

> Of course to each of us
> Privately, the chief difference from its peers
> Rests not even in its centrality, but its
> Strangeness composed of our own intimacy
> With a part of it, our necessary
> Ignorance of its limits, and diurnal pretense
> That what we see of it is all.

But where she would compress, Merwin enlarges and develops his thought, preferring to work on a larger canvas. This tendency to spread himself, particularly in those poems which are conversational in tone and sparing in imagery, makes him a less easy poet to read than those I have already considered.

It is also instructive to compare him with Thomas Blackburn. Whereas Blackburn lives in his myths, Merwin explores his parables. Merwin, unlike Blackburn, is not obsessed by certain aspects of life; often he creates in one poem a total symbol of life itself. "I think of Poetry, of

The Poem," he has explained, "as of a thing made into a sign, a rite, an analogue of the human condition." The result can be extremely impressive, as in "Dictum: for a Masque of Deluge", one of the best known of his poems, and one in which he uses a more formal and decorative style, rich in those images that sustain patience and fix attention for the reader:

> They stood and traded restlessness beneath
> A gathering dark, until their figures seem
> But a flutter of speech down an expense of wind.

In another poem, "White Goat, White Ram", he explains the secret of his method, though more obliquely than D. J. Enright:

> Mark this; for though they assume
> Now the awkward postures of illustrations
> For all our parables, yet the mystery they stand in
> Is still as far from what they signify
> As from the mystery we stand in. It is the sign
> We make of them, not they, that speaks from their dumbness
> That our dumbness may speak.

W. S. Merwin, perhaps more than any other post-war poet, reveals the range and vitality of the major artist. He may well give us a poem, even poems, to set beside *The Four Quartets*.

Books by the four poets considered in Mr. Pratt Green's essay:

The Laughing Hyena, by D. J. Enright (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 8s. 6d.)

The Outer Darkness, by Thomas Blackburn (Hand & Flower Press, 1s.).
(The Holy Stone is shortly to be published by the same Press).

Poems, by Elizabeth Jennings (Fantasy Press, Swinford, Eynsham, Oxon., 5s.).

A Mask for Janus, by W. S. Merwin (Oxford University Press).

"CAST MY DELIGHT . . ."

MONICA PRITCHETT

> Cast my delight in bronze: direct its brilliance
> Down every limb of the boy leaping with an arrow,
> My delight as easily broken as springing water —
>
> Cast my tranquillity in silver, the light-grower,
> Under the wings of a sea-bird stilled while flying;
> My deep tranquillity, designed never to falter . . .
>
> But my sorrow — my sorrow needs neither bronze nor silver,
> Eve first cast in the flesh of the ravished race
> The poet's, the lover's failure, the failure of saints,
> And suffering flared in the bones of a human face.

THE POET IS THE UNDERTAKER

JOHN GRADDON

Leave me alone, for I've a rendezvous with words
Before I go, empty of my own contriving,
Before I come, Earth, empty, home.

Leave me alone and I'll not hinder you,
Nor parody your likeness to the squeezing worm;
Nor shine the stars upon your dusty change;
Nor mock your mewing at nihility;
Nor stop your traffic with the golden stairs;
Nor blandly patronize the dwarfs you ride
To find the end that isn't and the time that was;
Nor make your minds a snood to catch the hair
That tumbles from the forehead of an ape.

You may go and play your games and as you will,
But do not trifle with my destiny,
Or I'll stalk, screaming with an earthy mouth,
Carve pregnant words on every block of air
And squeeze the matrix of a dozen minds
For liqueur that will fill a line of verse
Of bleak euclidean thought, whose sparse outline
Would stop a chiming clock;
Would vowel-mouth a crowded stage;
Would prairie-fire a timbered mind;
Would civilize the hinter-lands of brains
That march with kaleidoscopic light
Across an empty space.

I've got the arrogance of destiny;
I'll carve a box — just so — you know!
Then take, with fortitude, the Present, dead,
Wrap cerecloths round and bind his bruiséd head,
Weight his flat eyes, release the tangled feet,
Coffin him in the comfort of security;
No past, no future, just the Present, dead.

Then, in the travail of a birthing thought,
With mind distorted by the pressing shape
Lunging for breath, I'll reach my end.

Unknowing medium; unconscious seer;
Unhappy instrument for prophecy.

I shall be smiling with my final mouth
As those fast-breeding words traverse and cleanse,
As worms the soil, the minds of men
And masticate the years.

THE NOTCHED BEAM

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH

"Look up," he said, "Those notches on the beam
Are where, at harvest, in this self-same barn
Two hundred years ago a labourer's fork
Struck as he tossed the sheaves." We stared and saw
Across the rafters his jagged, uneven mark.
Who was this man, unknown now and forgotten,
What had he thought, as over the beam in leaping
Gold the sheaves followed and fell, the laughing
Labourers chaffed his clumsiness? That evening
Harvest supper was spread, and the owls, skimming
Stubble where yesterday the corn was stirring,
Shied from the lamplit doorway and the dancing,
And dewy dusk slipped into quiet night
Blind with clouds, soft as the pelt of a mole.

The girl he kissed, the children that he fathered
Are all under time's touch made nothing, rolled
Into the common stuff of history,
And his bright future the dusty past to us.
His only claim to immortality
A notch on a beam; that, and a sprawling cross
Marking his name on a yellowed vestry page.
And yet, which one of us will leave as much,
Memorial of work well done, a token
Of harvest gathered in? Which one of us
Will make his mark upon eternity
With such a depth and innocence as he?

SONG OF AN OLD MAN

DANNIE ABSE

When I was a young man
with the pin-eyed cunning of a snake,
I'd walk by with my golden spurs
and the milk-white virgins would quake;
shyly, of course, very shyly.

When I rode by as a young man
I'd make each dainty apple fall,
before the October bough was bending
pretending ripeness was almost all.
I'd throw away the stump of course. Not thinking.

When no longer a young man
I embezzled the wages of sin
until the sticks of my pointed bones
pushed through my paper skin.
Things are not what they were, sir. Very different.

So now that I'm an old man
cold claws clutch my heart and breath.
I carry my ghost in me upright
and phantom eyes stare through my eyes at death.
I'm afraid, old ghost. *Very afraid.*

TO A MOTHER

JOHN LUCAS

Yours the hand that rocked away my tears,
Persuasive tears and those I shed in grief;
Enduring hand that succouring my years
Won battle with my cradle's unbelief.
Yours the smile that hastened fear to flight,
Replacing it with trust to make me brave,
Sapient smile, a sun that lit my night
And sent its darkness cowering like a slave.

Yours the heart that lavished on me, life,
And from its vital blood poured out a soul;
Enfolding heart, encompassing my strife,
Directing me towards my distant goal.
Yours the harvest — I, mature and free:
Do you weep silent now at what you see?

NATIVITY

(To Graham Greene)

ALAN BARNSLEY

Who will come in the hour of the snow
When the clouds are dark with it:
Holding their flakes from falling too soon
On the valley and hill-fields, the village Mirage?
Who will come at the dead hour of twelve
When the night is alive with it:
Holding its star from shining too soon
On the shephered and savant, the maiden Mirage?

Who will come but a Boy for her feeding?
The Baby of Fire with the mistletoe-skin
Crying out on his hour and the hollythorn crown.

He will come in the moment of pain
When the cheeks are dark with it:
Holding their shadows from blanching too soon
In the smiling the tear-fall, the mother Mirage.
He will come on the birthday of Grace
When the eyes are light with it:
Holding their secret from shining too soon
On the straw-throne the oxen, the angel Mirage.

He will come as a Child for her feeding;
The Baby of Fire with the mistletoe-skin
Crying out on his hour and the hollythorn crown.

Though centuries fall he will come:
Though night is picked white as the bones of the day
By the sun
He will come.

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

RICHARD O'DONOGHUE

Shovel the rubble in Kensington,
Broken remorseless blocks,
Heap it high
To God's own sky
And Love will clamber the rocks.

Bury the bones in Kensington
In a confidential square:
The Devil's wonder
May suck them under
But Love will lay them bare.

Scatter the ashes in Kensington
From St. Mary Abbots' spire,
When, phoenix-wise,
Shall Love arise
From the purifying fire.

What shall there be in Kensington
For Love that loves hereafter?
Why, ruins of grace
In a secret place
And a fountain weeping laughter.

MOON

DUDLEY G. DAVIES

The generations blossom and go by,
Whither and whence and wherefore no man knows;
Not like this moon that wanes upon the sky,
But waxes like a still renewing rose.

Not like this moon. She will return again,
Drifting her argent fume on plain and pool,
Burning her beauty's beacon, that will remain
Constant to just and unjust, wise and fool.

Stay not too late up-gazing, bright with tears,
Look not too long upon the silent moon.
There comes no whisper from her million years,
Descends no syllable of her silver rune.

"WHITE NOISE"—"GREEN SILENCE"

SENSE-TRANSFERENCE AS A CLUE TO MODERN POETRY

By KENNEDY WILLIAMSON

Much modern poetry that is obscure will become suddenly and startlingly clear, if a certain principle of expression is recognized. The principle is that experience in one of the five senses may be rendered in terms of another.

The bluntly matter-of-fact person may at once protest against the illogicality of any such transference; by objecting, however, he is on dangerous ground, for the principle is not really revolutionary but has long been firmly established, and he himself probably illustrates it in his own workaday speech.

The principle is at least as old as the Book of Exodus where we read (in Chapter 10 Verse 21) of "darkness which may be felt". Beyond all question, darkness is a phenomenon in the sphere of vision, but the darkness which was to cover Egypt was to be so gross as to be, as it were, palpable, such as could be touched, solid enough to be explored with the hands. This is a daring, but wholly legitimate, use of language. An experience in the sphere of vision is being described in terms which belong to the sphere of touch.

Moreover, if the hypothetical objector is musical and ever refers to a chromatic scale, he is acknowledging the reasonableness of the same principle. For "chromatic" means *having colour,* and colour belongs exclusively to the sphere of sight. Yet music operates in that of hearing. In the term "chromatic scale", an experience of sound, therefore, is being rendered in terms of sight.

Rudyard Kipling is not a modernist poet, and the person who rails against the absurdity of this kind of transference might roundly assert that Kipling would never have lent himself to anything so stupid. Nevertheless, describing the dawn as seen from the Road to Mandalay, Kipling said that it "comes up like thunder". Without any quibble, thunder is a phenomenon of sound, but dawn is something utterly silent, to be apprehended through the eyes. What Kipling meant was that just as thunder assails the ear dramatically and irresistibly, so the sunrise at Mandalay has a kind of splitting brilliance. As is thunder acoustically, so is the Indian sunrise visually. Surely that is a warrantable use of language, and a perfectly logical process of thought.

Actually, in employing words in this way, Kipling had been anticipated centuries before, for in the Biblical drama of *Job* we find (Chapter 39, Verse 19): "Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?" The vesture of the horse's neck is obviously soundless, but the superb mane and the groomed and glossy withers of the highly

vital war-horse may have upon the sensitive eye the same majestic effect as reverberating thunder has upon the ear.

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson does exactly the same thing when he refers to parrots of shrill green. Shrillness belongs to the kingdom of sound, and greenness to the kingdom of sight, but poets may cross the frontiers between these kingdoms. Surely it is clear that as shrillness has a piercingly sharp effect on the ears, the bright green of the parrots' plumage may have a piercingly sharp effect on the eyes. Even the plain, blunt, no-nonsense type of man will say that a crudely gay colour (on a woman's hat perhaps) *shouts*. Why then does he deny to poets an idiom which has the sanction of his own speech?

A poet may reasonably write that "lilacs lift their purple voices". For if the colour of greenness may be shrill, may not the purple hue of lilacs have a voice? Lascelles Abercrombie extends this concept that a colour may have a voice, and a voice a colour, for in a poem called "The Death of a Friar" he writes of a "choir of colours" and he describes a noise as "white, whiter than moonlight on a sword" and "crystalline bright" and later in the same poem he refers to "shining din". Not only sound but also the absence of sound may be visual, for Carducci speaks of "a green silence".

Much of the alleged obscurity of Edith Sitwell's poetry disappears, once this transference-principle is acknowledged. In "Aubade" she says of the morning light that it "creaks down" and, elsewhere in the same poem, that it "whines". If, for Kipling on the Road to Mandalay, dawn may come up like thunder, surely for Edith Sitwell it may creak down and whine, when she describes the penetration of the morning light on to a squalid staircase. Elsewhere she speaks of "the ventriloquist sound of light". To the literal-minded, of course, it must be conceded that, of all things in the world, light is supremely soundless, and yet light may flash on us from a quarter from which we do not expect it, just as a ventriloquist may cause sound to spring (or seem to spring) from a source not the real one.

Elsewhere in the volume *Gold Coast Customs* she writes of "a bone that bellows white". This seems merely a meaningless string of words until you have this clue of sense-interchange. A bone may be bleached so dazzlingly bright as to have on the eyes the same effect as bellowing has on the ear. As bellowing is an ultimate auditory experience, so says the poet, is the hardly endurable incandescence of the bone upon the eye. Thus expanded, the proposition is eminently reasonable but poetry must be compressed, allusive and economical, and hence some of its obscurity.

In conclusion, a summary and classification of the instances I have noted may be helpful:—

Sight in terms of Touch: a darkness that may be felt.

Sight in Terms of Sound: the dawn comes up like thunder; the horse's neck clothed with thunder; parrots of shrill green; lilacs lift their purple voices; choir of colours; light creaks down; ventriloquist sound of light; bone that bellows white.

Sound in terms of Sight: chromatic scale; noise whiter than moonlight; shining din; green silence.

EXODUS

ELLEN E. H. COLLINS

The sun throbbed like a temple gong
High in the burning turquoise sky.
Weary the bronzed and vagrant tribes,
Whose priests, with flashing, eagle eye,
Scanned the horizon for the sight
Of cloud by day, and fire by night,
Which, through the parching desert sand,
Should lead them to the Promised Land.

Gaunt cacti reared their spiny arms
From painted sand, like crucifix,
And flaring crimson cereus stars
Blazed forth from seven-branched candlesticks.
Deadly as desert serpent's hiss,
Harsh murmurs rose to harsher sky:
"Lo, thou has brought us here to die,
We perish in the desert's way!"
They turned on their High Priest, to slay;
But he beheld a boulder stone —
Green rock of rough, ribbed chalcedon —
Struck with his blade, and with that shock,
Brought water from the living rock.

Thus were the first fierce Aztec tribes
Led to their lake-girt city bright,
By Popocatepetl's plumes
Of smoke by day, and fire by night.
The hard bisnaga, on the way,
Yielded them drink, their thirst to stay,
From its green, craggy cactus stock —
Water from a living rock!

(Many desert cacti exactly resemble stones and boulders. The bisnaga, or barrel cactus, contains a life-giving, watery fluid).

HORSEMEN IN THE PARK

LESLIE DAIKEN

Filing from their dismal barrack
in the street where never the sun shines
parade the cavalry; their clop
like a xylophone rising:
a fine line, one rider to three mounts.

Hooves, ringing on the roadstones
from castanet trickle to crescendo
of steel on macadam,
tearing the morning's young throat,
drowning the drowsy libido
of woodpigeon on Primrose Hill,
bruit, in this tumult of shoes upon paving,
of cavalcades down the lanes of time.

While the horse-sweat
hanging in their wake like vapour
smacks of wild mustang-thunder;
of yellow asian stallions
urged back and forth through the hills' tundish
by Tartar, Magyar, Slav.

A thousand cavalry stampedes
from Genghis Khan to Sobietski
have clashed on steppe and plateau
to trace as a hieroglyph through centuries
the horseman's stance of pride and power.

Robots change; now gone their hour;
the horses freshly step with daintiness.
Farrier and groom,
quartermaster, troop,
have so contrived
to curb this fireblood force
that a wise Treasury will pay
fabulous pounds per mane
to provender these household pets
and train a reined soldiery in stable
against some Nation's Day,
some popular parade.

So should all soldiers be maintained —
alone for pageantry,
and never loose the bearing-rein on war.

COTSWOLD COUNTRY

THEA HUNT

I shall not find it here
Under the bridges,
The low grey bridges,
Spanning the shallow running streams.
Only the river hair —
Long grey-green flowing hair
Couched in a pebble bed —
Can be found here.

I shall not find it here
In lush marsh meadows;
Down by the rushes,
Down where the grey shadowy trout
Lie silent, hidden.
Only a dragon-fly
Poised on forget-me-nots
Can be found here.

I shall not find it here
In the still garden,
Where feckless butterflies
Flirting with moted sunbeams
Die in the shadows.
Only a cypress tree
Still as a painted screen
Can be found here.

I cannot find it here;
But I shall find it
In the still afterglow
When the sun's glory is hidden
By the years' twilight.
In the pale quiet starshine
Much that lies hidden now
I shall find there.

THE POEM THAT INFLUENCED ME

A SYMPOSIUM

Strange, that poets should be unable to recall the poem of an earlier time which set them writing, the poem which above all others was the first to influence them. Responding to the enquiry which is the reason for this Symposium one well-known poet declares that he read so many others before he began to write his own that he has failed to single out any especial one of them: and another poet, equally well known, confesses that he only remembers that he began by committing a bare-faced plagiarism and, thanks to an editor's ignorance, actually got it printed!

Happily such forgetfulness, or absent-mindedness, is not usual. And, following this expression of our editorial surprise, we print the contributions of four contemporary poets of distinction — L. A. G. Strong, Phoebe Hesketh, Kenneth Hare, and F. L. Lucas.

The Symposium will be continued in our next, but with a difference. It will be a Symposium for readers. We invite them to submit their own recollections of the poem which first made them want to be poets, whether they succeeded in their ambition or not. Prizes are offered for the four best contributions of not more than 150 words, addressed to "Symposium, *The Poetry Review,* 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

L. A. G. STRONG

I can't pick on any single poem that made me begin to write. The first poem that hit me, when I was a small boy, was Tennyson's *Morte d'Arthur;* but I think it was the influence of John M. Synge that inspired me to try my own hand. My first poems certainly owe more to him than to anybody.

PHOEBE HESKETH

When I was about six years old I realized that there was a way of crystallizing the wonder of life beyond the small powers of grown-up talk and story reading. I lived at the edge of a town park overlooking a river. Across the river was an enchanted land of freedom from forbidden grass and flower-beds, and from bandstands and spiked iron railings.

Down by a shining water well
I found a very little dell
No higher than my head . . .
And all about was mine . . .

Yes, Robert Louis Stevenson awoke something deep within me, so that on wet nursery afternoons I used to read *A Child's Garden of Verses* rather than play with the children invited to tea.

But it is the ecstasy of life itself, rather than any particular poem, that makes one write — the excitement of the first crocus or a crackling autumn bonfire, and the expectation of some new wonder round every corner. Because of this I started to write verses when I was nine; what I had read provided the pattern, but the impulse sprang from youth and joy.

I first became aware of poetry, the magic crystal itself, as opposed to verse and my own clumsy exuberance, when at the age of fourteen I was introduced by an enthusiastic schoolmistress to the poems of Tennyson. I had slogged through *Marmion* and *The Lays of Ancient Rome*, and "Oenone" and "The Lotus Eaters" revealed to me what I had before only dimly felt in the unexplored darkness of mind and heart. I realized a dream only when I awoke to:

> There is sweet music here that softer falls
> Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
> Or night dews on still waters between walls
> Of shadowy granite in a gleaming pass;
> Music that gentlier on the spirit lies
> Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes . . .

KENNETH HARE

The first author I ever read was Shakespeare; the first play, *Hamlet.* (One of the elders may have aroused my curiosity by mentioning it in my hearing.) I was then between seven and eight, so young in fact, that when on glancing ahead I caught sight of the stage direction, *Enter Ghost,* I closed the volume with a beating heart. From that moment I dared not read when quite alone. I feared that to do so when others were in the room would expose me to chaff if not indeed to active opposition. I therefore devised a plan for indulging my fearful fascination without unduly harrowing my emotions. I would abstract and hide the volume under the pillow in my nursery, upon nights when guests were expected to dinner. My younger brother would be asleep; my elder occupied a different room. As soon as I could hear laughter and conversation from downstairs, I would begin reading. It gave me a sense of security to feel the proximity of possible allies, should there be a case of *Enter Ghost* in sober reality!

My next play was *Macbeth* and without any conscious effort at learning them I soon had the hair-raising ingredients of the witches' infernal stew by heart. Owing to my secretive manner of reading, I had finished *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the three parts of *Henry VI* before my elders took note of my studies. The chaff I had dreaded was the immediate result. Often when I had supposed myself absolutely alone, my mother would suddenly rush into the room crying, "Does the Muse flow?"

My father would ask if I had yet found "that rhyme for Nebuchadnezzar?" I can laugh now and make allowances. Then, it infuriated me. Henceforth Shakespeare was hidden. I discovered him anew however and — what was equally important — a hide-out where I could read undisturbed; first an outdoor coal-house; later the broad gutter of an apple-loft which I could reach by climbing and to which I was never tracked. Shelley, Rossetti and Herrick were my next poetic discoveries, at the house of a sympathetic grandfather.

F. L. LUCAS

How remember? Yet chance gives the answer from a dusty drawing-book of my sixth or seventh year — ferocious green and white mountains, a firwood like a moulting hedgehog, a river of bluest chalk, and the title — "Lonely is the place were (*sic*) the wild time grows". I had misunderstood my Mother overheard quoting Shakespeare's Oberon. (Yet I have sought the place ever since, for "time grows" ever shorter, and even a forty-eight hour day would be all too short). At seven came, more important, Dean Church's honest prose retelling of *Iliad* and *Odyssey;* then Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome,* Longfellow's "King Olaf", Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner", Tennyson — and Gibbon! I launched into verse on the comical theme, for ten, of "The Rape of Proserpine". Love of lonely places, of the ancient world, of action, rather than chatter about feelings — I see now that they were all already there. Are we moulded by early influences, or do we hunt by instinct, as a little pig scents truffles? Nurture or Nature? Two thirds, I suspect, the second — perhaps more.

THE POETRY SOCIETY: ANNUAL GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual General Business Meeting of the Poetry Society (Incorporated) will be held at the offices of the Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, on Wednesday, 26th May, 1954 at 3.0 p.m., to receive the annual financial statement, and elect the general members of the General Council. Names of delegates representing Centres should be sent to the General Secretary not later than 10th April, 1954, together with names of the Centre representatives on the General Council.

Admission will be made upon production of membership cards.

Any member who wishes to bring any business before the Annual Meeting must give twenty-eight days' written notice thereof to the General Secretary. Nominations for membership to the General Council must be made by two members of the General Council or three unattached members twenty-eight days prior to the Meeting.

Any member wishing to inspect the audited Statement of Accounts before the General Business Meeting may do so at this office between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. (Saturdays excepted), or may have a copy sent on application enclosing a stamped addressed envelope after 30th April.

—By Order of the Council.

"DEAR EDITORS—"

(The opinions expressed in the following Letters from Readers are not necessarily those of *The Poetry Review*).

LET'S LAUGH

As a group the Editorial Board of our excellent periodical have shown themselves unanimous in welcoming all that is authentic in poetry and indeed the arts that may be associated with it. It is their job to distinguish between the true and the false, and really, some recent pronouncements by supposed authorities appear so absurd that the only possible response is not serious condemnation but ridicule.

We are told that "a good love-poem, though it be addressed to one person, is always meant to be overheard by other people. Surely the proper language of love — that is, of communication to the beloved and to no one else — is prose." T. S. Eliot is speaking, and by him we are assured that the choruses of *Murder in the Cathedral* "had to be consistent with the character of the Women of Canterbury." He actually said this during the National Book League's annual lecture, so let us hear what the "poor" women are made to chant in chorus:

> I have tasted
> The living lobster, the crab, the oyster, the whelk and the prawn; and they live and spawn in my bowels, and my bowels dissolve in the light of dawn. I have smelt
> Death in the rose . . . I have felt
> The horn of the beetle, the scale of the viper, the mobile hard insensitive skin of the elephant, the evasive flank of the fish, I have smelt
> Corruption in the dish, incense in the latrine, the sewer in the incense, the smell of sweet soap in the wood path, a hellish sweet scent in the wood path, while the ground heaved . . .

To ask us to believe that the simple, illiterate villagers of the early twelfth century thought and spoke like that is as ridiculous as to ask us to put aside many of the great love-poems of the world — Robert Burns's, for instance — and accept prose as the lover's proper language when he is addressing "the beloved and no one else". LILIAN STEWART

WHAT POETRY LACKS TO-DAY

Lord Dunsany's remarks at the Authors' Club dinner were very interesting to me, and I hope they will be duly noted in Portman Square. There is no craftmanship, no architecture and none of the old breath-taking verbal beauty in much of modern poetry — simply because the "moderns" will not serve the necessarily long apprenticeship the aspiring poet must serve to secure mastery over a vocabulary consonant with accepted verse-forms. Even *The Poetry Review* would find it difficult to

escape some of the criticisms made by Lord Dunsany, although it is not such a culprit as some journals I could name.

Wouldn't it be a good thing if someone reprinted the famous Australian hoax of some years ago when an official sewage report was carefully cut up and submitted and accepted for publication as poetry?

With all good wishes to you for 1954, and may all your contributors have read, learned and inwardly digested all that Lord Dunsany and your Editorial Board have said. H. JOHN JARVIS

HERBERT PALMER AND KENNETH HARE

Mr. Kenneth Hare, via *The Poetry Review* has addressed me a somewhat expostulatory letter concerning my review of his long narrative poem, *The Ballad of Sir John Philpot*. When I wrote: "He is so romantically old-fashioned that he borrows from speech that died during the last century," the little monosyllable "so" was accidentally dropped from my MS. or the proof-sheet. I meant that Mr. Hare does not conform to the poetical usages of this century, being in line with neither Modernists nor Georgians, away also from the differing individual idioms of Ruth Pitter (classical or semi-classical), James Stephens, Roy Campbell, Masefield, Yeats and others. The phrase "borrows from speech" may seem a little half-baked, but it does express in a narrow condensed form what economy of space hindered me from explaining more completely.

All the same, it was a pleasure not to discern in him any of the recently much admired stammering fog-horn tones of leg-pulling Celts, nor the flat sophistications of any trios of Blind Mice, nor the confident squatting postures of physician standbadlies, nor the religious gropings of those who walk upstairs backwards, nor, indeed, any of the other characteristic melodies that gladden the ears of those who have descended into Hades. But I felt that Kenneth Hare's endeavours were downright purgatorial by the side of his captivating rendering of the medieval dialect poem, *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*, which he first published a long time ago and has recently reissued. HERBERT PALMER

"THE BALLAD OF SIR JOHN PHILPOT"

In denying Mr. Hare the classical qualities, I feel that your critic, Herbert Palmer, does him scant justice. Take any verse at random; you will find it to be both simple and direct.

I think also that your critic is misleading in saying that this poem will chiefly attract readers who are "interested in the reign of Richard II". I know nothing of the fourteenth century, but "The Ballad of Sir John Philpot" carried me through mood after mood, sinister, lavish or politically ugly, but always with the medieval London Town in the background; and I found the appeal quickened by the lyrical movement of the metre so formal and yet so swift; suggestive of a Tarantella or a Tudor dance. WAVENEY GIRVAN

Book Reviews . . .

SCOTS WHO HAVE

By STEPHEN GRAHAM

Burns Into English: Renderings of Selected Dialect Poems, by William Kean Seymour (Wingate, 12s. 6d.).

Dialect, when it is ironed out into plain English, becomes conventional. There is a better word for it in slang: it becomes "prissy", like a village maid dressed according to the mode of the town. So Kean Seymour, though he is a man of fine poetic feeling, had an unenviable task when he undertook to change the songs of the Ayrshire countryside into English poetry.

Burns himself could not have done it, though he could write in a pure style, devoid of dialect. He found it easier to translate some of the sentiments of Gray's Elegy into Scots than to write poetry in Gray's language. "The ploughman homeward plods his weary way" became "The toil-worn cottar frae his labour goes", and while Gray wrote of the blazing hearth and the children running "to lisp their sire's return and climb his knees the envied kiss to share", Burns wrote:

His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnilie,
His clean hearth stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile.

which is rendered back by Seymour:

His tiny fireside glowing merrily,
His clean hearthstone, his thrifty wife's glad smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
His deep anxiety and care beguile.

The chief value of *Burns Into English* is that it can be read first as a preparation for the reading and appreciation of the original. It would have been better to print the original and the English version side by side. Some poems like "Tam O'Shanter" are excruciatingly difficult even for many born north of the Tweed, and it is just as well for them to know what it is all about. This applies also to the other longer poems. The shorter poems and songs have more need to stand by themselves untranslated. The sly pawky humour of "O ye wha are sae good yoursel" becomes merely hymnal in "O ye in goodness who excel". When "Fair fa' your honest sonsie face" is changed to "Good luck to your plump honest face" it is English quite English, but the whisky breath has gone. Lines to a haggis must have a tinge of usquebaugh. The immortal words

an honest man's aboon his might.
Guid faith he mauna fa' that!

are as understandable as

an honest man 's beyond his might.
Good faith — he can't confer that!

but it has something extra which cannot be translated, a grimace, a closed fist struck on a bar-room table.

The English language is more successful in rendering the famous poem to a mouse and it is still notable in Seymour's trans-literation:

Wee, glossy, cowering, timorous beastie
O what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need not start away so hasty,
With frantic scuttle!

though those who swear by Burns may shudder. But then this is not a book made for Scots, but for Americans, dwellers on the South Bank, D.P.'s, and other lesser breeds without the Law. As such it will prove valuable and lead to a love of Burns in the original. For the poetry is universal.

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

By KATHLEEN VALMAI RICHARDSON

Gardeners and Astronomers, by Edith Sitwell (Macmillan, 8s. 6d.).

Collected Poems of Charlotte Mew: with a Biographical Memoir by Alida Monro (Duckworth, 10s. 6d.).

Selected Poems, by R. C. Trevelyan with a Letter and Caricature by Sir Max Beerbohm (Macgibbon and Kee, 8s. 6d.).

Poetess — that greenery-yallery title, has now become an anachronistic if not opprobrious epithet, and Dr. Sitwell personifies the metamorphosis in female status. We should not be deluded by her academic honours into forgetting that in her beginnings, a boldly experimental mind drove her thought down unexplored paths to find a self-expression quite removed from the inhibited voice of frustration which pricked so many Victorian women.

A noteworthy characteristic, and that which raised Edith Sitwell above her fellows, was her determination to achieve not only free expression, but technique — a technique founded upon the solid rock of classical tradition but with virgin material. Her minute and patient study of every inflexion of her art compares with that which has produced the masters in music and painting:

In my canicular days, I, the companion
Of the high Sun, could never dream of setting,
Or that I should not find the answer to the Question.

Style and authority are bred of long apprenticeship and stern self-discipline; a fact often unwelcome to frustrated and budding talent alike.

In *Gardeners and Astronomers* we may gather some of the late golden fruit foreshadowed in Dr. Sitwell's prefaces to her anthologies; learning pursued and cherished not for its own sake but to an end — the poet's craft.

> . . . The past and the present are as one —
> Accordant and discordant, youth and age,
> And death and birth. For out of one came all —
> From all comes one.

"The Blinded Song-Bird" shows that her power no longer derives chiefly from that which first brought her fame — an extraordinary percipience for the texture of words. The language of this poem has been used before, but how seldom with such poignancy. Few of the shorter poems of Charlotte Mew can approach it; nor can they stand beside those of another walled-in spirit — Emily Dickinson. The nagging tyranny of rhyme holds them down as her own sardonic inversion held Charlotte Mew. Emily had her God to turn to; Charlotte, only herself. Yet, curiously, it was the conventional God of her era who conjured from Charlotte Mew her best poem: "Madeleine in Church". Labouring still under the shackles of "poesy", her spirit struggled once to its full height. She undoubtedly had the poet's gift for transmuting her own emotions to another climate. The passionate masculinity of "The Farmer's Wife" is astounding after the Ohs and Ahs of the lesser poems. She seems to have had a double personality — the poet who could write "Fame", "Domus Caedat Arborem" and "Fin de Fête"; the poetess who perpetrated the period whimsies, the city dweller's wet-violet verses with the inevitable moral at the end. Yet *she* could write ". . . jessamine music on the thin night air", and Edith Sitwell's pen did not disdain:

> "Only the April rain, my dear —
> Only the April rain."

Lines out of context do strange things to poetry.

The *Selected Poems* of R. C. Trevelyan must be approached with respect since a scholar's mind produced them. Here, the learning has not been specifically dedicated to nurture of poetic sinew; it has itself become the frustration. The weariness of Reason informs much of this poetry with a profound melancholy: "The Prison House", "I Am Not of the People". "Pleasure", with its complete evasion of all sensuous warmth, is as revealing as any. One feels that the true range and nobility of the writer's mind come through in his letters to his grandchild and to his friend, Desmond MacCarthy, quotations from whom, included in the foreword, help us to read between the lines. An affectionate caricature by the great Max completes the picture.

GREEN FIELDS

By E. D. BANGAY

The Faber Book of Children's Verse, edited by Janet Adam Smith (Faber and Faber, 12s. 6d.).

The English Association Book of Verse, edited by Peter Leyland and M. Alderton Pink (Allen and Unwin, 10s. 6d.).

The Apollo Anthology, edited by Lucy Selwyn and Laurier Lister (John Murray, 12s. 6d.).

The Fields were Green, by George Arms (Stanford University Press, California, $4.50).

In each of these anthologies old friends and new rub shoulders, but the old ones predominate in number. Arrangement and grouping differ a good deal. In *The Faber Book* some of the groups are under rather unusual headings: "Seasons and Weathers"; "Beasts and Birds"; "Victuals and Drinks". Collected over a wide range of time, there are grim poems (which the compiler assures us have been proved acceptable to children), serious poems, and many jolly poems; for even serious poets like Eliot, Housman, and Pound are caught in jovial mood with Jellicle Cats, Grizzly Bear, and Dog Habits. The few explanatory notes and informative details are well indexed at the end so as not to spoil the pleasurable first impact of the poem upon the young reader.

Compiled for The English Association, *A Book of Verse* also covers a wide field of choice and time, and includes every variety of style, grouped again by themes; and again the classical poets predominate. The book is a mine of good thoughts and good poems which, as the publisher points out, are given an added interest by the juxtaposition of old and new.

The Apollo Anthology is a selection of verse and suggested music introduced by Cecil Day Lewis, Peggy Ashcroft, and Angus Morrison. The Apollo Society seeks to give recitals of poetry accompanied by and interspersed with music, claiming that the marriage of these arts gives the greatest possible pleasure to their audience.

Opinions differ strongly about the background of music to spoken verse. To some it is an unwarranted distraction. But all will agree that in this book the poems and music chosen are among the very best. Ballads and narrative poems are of course largely used, backed by many lovely shorter lyrics. Nor does the scheme lack humour, that necessary saving grace which relaxes the tension of tragedy and sharpens the points of philosophy.

In *The Fields Were Green* the author makes a scholarly study of the New England "Schoolroom Poets", Bryant, Whittier, Holmes, Lowell, and Longfellow, inquiring into the reasons for their present critical neglect and re-assessing their value and appeal. Many interesting facts

and theories are brought out into the light of scrutiny and the opinions of other critics carefully compared. Mr. Arms himself believes that a revaluation should result in a greater approval of them, although as minor and not major poets. He illustrates his arguments with apt quotations and many entire poems.

LET US GIVE THANKS

By JOHN GRADDON

Collected Poems, by Herbert Read (Faber, 15s. 0d.).

Poems, 1953, by Robert Graves (Cassell, 7s. 6d.).

Sixpenny Songs, by John Pudney (Bodley Head, 4s. 6d.).

To many of my generation Herbert Read was one of a golden few who pointed the path in poetry. In the years of disillusion he spoke for our disgust and showed us that, even with all standards toppling, something remained of the spirit of man that kept him only a little lower than the angels.

Sassoon, Owen, Read, Graves, Rosenberg — these saved us from throwing the poem into the limbo of our many discards. The land forever England would serve for those at home, but the mud and blood of Somme and Passchendaele demanded a more authentic note, a vision that could penetrate the welter of excremental butchery and see the agonized mind and crucified spirit of the individual — voices that could articulate and make plain the feelings, thoughts, passions, terrors, fears and kindnesses that lay inchoate, indigestible, clogging the very taste of life and refining or brutalizing the man:—

> When you see millions of the mouthless dead
> Across your dreams in pale battalions go,
> Say not soft things as other men have said —

and who remembers C. H. Sorley now?

Let us give thanks that Read and Graves remain and are remembered. The volume of the collected poems of Sir Herbert Read takes the place of *Poems, 1914–1934* and includes those composing *A World Within a War.*

Robert Graves says, in his foreword, that he has written more poems in the last two years than in the previous ten. Both are craftsmen to a superlative degree. Symbol, imagery, and verbal economy convey the fierce intensity of inward sight that made them unforgettable so many years ago.

It is five years since John Pudney published his last volume "Commemorations" about those who fought in the air in the last war: and these, pleasant and lyrical as they are, and referring to a more common ground of experience, are perhaps, and naturally, less communicable.

HALCYON IN THE RAVENS' NEST

By P. D. CUMMINS

Halcyon, by Rob Lyle (Hand and Flower Press, 4s.).

At a time when many poets have, consciously or unconsciously, subordinated feeling to intellect, assuming black plumage and emitting strangely raucous notes, gratitude is mingled with the wonder of discovering a halcyon in the ravens' nest.

Halcyon is Rob Lyle's second book, and apart from some early verses, it is surer in touch, more individual and mature than his previous collection. He writes with great facility, and here let me put in one word of warning: such facility can be dangerous in that it can lead to unselectiveness. Let the steed show its paces, by all means, but let it be controlled with a tighter rein. Mr. Lyle's work will gain enormously by the exercise of this restraint, the more so as he possesses the qualities of the true romantic and lyrical poet. This should not be taken to mean that his poems are sugary-sweet or sickly-sentimental; what it does mean is that, while he is only too aware of the unease, the instability of our generation, he is able to lift these fears and doubts out of the dust, and, when he is writing at his best, he succeeds in investing them with a strange, dream-like beauty.

What is most characteristic of his work is that sense of urgency, of inner compulsion from which the creative instinct is born — born to beat its wings against the cage of its own limitations, as Mr. Lyle knows only too well:

> I would express what cannot be expressed,
> Would mate the microscopic and gigantic;
> Into a tumbler force the whole Atlantic;
> Identify the wounded and caressed.
> From syllables of wonder I would wrest
> As vast a silence, muted and semantic;
> And I would wed the tranquil and the frantic,
> Inspiring movement in eternal rest.
> Words, words — they press like clouds above my head
> As Autumn's heavy with its thunderous vines;
> I seek the inarticulately pure,
> The faint and far impossible, the dread
> Horizon of desire whose fringe refines
> A light so dazzling that it must obscure.

All the longings, the dissatisfactions which mark the authentic poet are perfectly expressed in this sonnet.

It would be ungrateful to close this brief review without thanking the Hand and Flower Press for having brought a number of new and worthwhile poets to our notice in the past and for publishing such a collection as *Halcyon* at a price which is within our reach.

THE NEW ORTHODOXIES

By ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Creative Element, by Stephen Spender (Hamish Hamilton, 15s.).
The Modern Writer and His World, by G. S. Fraser (Verschoyle, 16s.).

A year before the War Stephen Spender, defining his attitude as a writer towards contemporary society, published *The Destructive Element* in which he sought to trace the impact on literature of despair and decay in the body politic. Now with maturer eyes and from a more positive position he has developed his theme under the more hopeful title of *The Creative Element.*

Anything that Stephen Spender writes is sensitive, perceptive, and penetrating. Recalling an assertion by Baudelaire that society a hundred years ago was being engulfed by materialism he traces the response to it of certain writers and deduces that there has been a definite pattern in their progress to religious or secular orthodoxy. His argument is pursued through a series of brilliant analyses covering the work of outstanding modern poets. Except when he writes about E. M. Forster, George Orwell, Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene in relation to orthodoxy his thesis is concerned with the poetic vision.

Spender points to T. S. Eliot's poem, "The Waste Land" as the nadir of despair, but he emphasizes Eliot's gradual passage from despair to religious orthodoxy.

The response of Auden, Day Lewis, MacNeice and Spender himself to the despair of Eliot and Pound by adopting an ideology involving a political attitude is dealt with, and so is D. H. Lawrence with his plea for the fullness of instinctive life in which personal relations are raised and replenished by the power and purity of tradition.

The Modern Writer and His World, by G. S. Fraser, serves to test how far the new orthodoxies postulated by Spender are indeed being observed and pursued. No more is claimed in the introduction than that the book is designed to indicate landmarks as a plain man's guide to modern literature. The author covers the familiar paths of poetry from Browning to Dylan Thomas, but he is strangely content to conclude his survey with a limited summary of method and trend from 1944 to the present time. Barker, Gascoyne, Thomas, Graves, Muir, Edith Sitwell, and Kathleen Raine practically exhaust the range of quotation in this section.

Nevertheless Fraser is too good a critic to mistake finally the particular for the general, and it is undoubtedly true that the experimenters and adventurers are moving parallel with the greater body towards a clearer and more universal symbolism. The conclusions of Spender and Fraser are on common ground; the one finding the creative element expressed

in new orthodoxies to redeem the disillusion and materialism of society, and the other emphasizing the technique by which these orthodoxies are conveyed as poetry, which must always be an art of communication.

ROOT AND FLOWER

By GEOFFREY JOHNSON

Pittsburgh Saga, by Marie Tello Phillips (Falmouth House, two dollars).

This finely produced book by one in her eightieth year consists of polyphonic verse vividly dealing with The Origin of Pittsburgh, Braddock's defeat at Fort Duquesne, General Forbes' Expedition and Bouquet's Victory, followed by work more traditional in lyric and sonnet. In the triad of martial episodes the short-sentenced style, sharply pointed with concrete detail, has a rapid rifle-fire effect. The bonfire-night eeriness of the Indians 'staggering under booty . . . in the goldlaced uniforms of officers' and 'brandishing blood-red tomahawks' is one of several most striking and indelible impressions.

A more general view of the writer's many-sided gifts is obtainable from the miscellaneous shorter work. She is at her best when the theme is personal in origin and the words sing directly from the heart, for example the simple and forthright emotion of the sonnet "I Miss You", with its almost unbearably pathetic last line. Much the same quality pervades her best religious poems which, whether one is or is not as orthodox a Christian as the author, strike one as being of a deep sincerity.

She is less effective in poems on the contemporary scene: she also echoes other poets, occasionally, as in the Yeatsian end-poem: "Remember, step softly, for these are my dreams."

Apart from these small blemishes, this collection is a notable addition to her long list of achievements in poetry, the essay and the novel, and one which amply justifies the many literary awards, decorations, and honours bestowed upon her through a long and richly active life.

HELEN

ELAINE WESTON

She passed my window, head in air,
All unaware I saw
The classic grace, the dreaming face,
The leisured nun-like pace.
Beauty's disciple, she —
I, Beauty's devotee.

POETRY BOOKS GALORE

Notes by the Editorial Staff

(The inclusion of a new work in these notes does not preclude a subsequent review).

When a poet's book is published with an introduction by a distinguished senior, as Dr. Edith Sitwell, or Siegfried Sassoon, or W. H. Auden, the reader accepts it with complete assurance. Therefore we need offer hardly more than the salient particulars of three new volumes. To begin, *English Morning and Other Poems,* by Leonard Clark (Hutchinson, 10s. 6d.), has the blessing of Edith Sitwell, who describes it as the work of "one to whom, in Nietzche's phrase, 'All his days are holy'." A superbly produced *Collected Poems* of Anna Gordon Keown (Caraval Press, 30s.) has given Siegfried Sassoon "a sense of release from the over-particularisation, reportings, and pathologies of contemporary verse. Mrs. Keown has dared to be lyrical, and even rhapsodic." The author's dedication is "To My Husband, Philip Gosse" — which name has a renown of its own in contemporary letters. Mr. Auden's send-off is given to Edgar Bogardus, whose *Various Jangling Keys* is published in the Yale Series of Younger American Poets by the Yale University Press (Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford U.P., 16s.).

In a similar way we accept a poet's book bearing the imprint of one of the publishers who regard it as necessary to encourage the writing of poetry. This, *All Time to Come,* by Ernest Miles, is a welcome newcomer from The Hand and Flower Press. The author is inclined to pattern-making, but he need be none the worse for that — except when he writes "And now I feel no mortal consanguinities." At its best his work has colour, and real feeling for the life of the fields and trees — and "the greening height of heaven." And colour means light in John Wheatley's little volume, *The Sequence of Dreams* (Pimpernel Press, Stratford-upon-Avon), notably in such pieces as "Bedouin Girl" and in such lines as "The broken glass fell down like little bells." Mr. Wheatley has been a Poetry Society prize-winner.

Patrick Anderson, a Canadian in England, has published *The Colour as Naked* (McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, $2.75), a collection uneven in quality but always interesting for its formality and lyrical imagery. Even more atmospheric and no less precise and singing is *Leaves of the Jungle,* by Richard L. Spittel (Times of Ceylon), which is charmingly illustrated by Allan Cameron. We are listening to a Singhalese voice, rare and musical. *Music* is the title of a richly-presented Poem of Praise in Coronation Year by John Hoffman (Guild Press, Chesterfield, 2s.). The music is in speech, rhapsodic and quiet turn by turn, "the gay troubadour glorifying God." Mr. Hoffman, as our readers know, is definitely a poet, and this gracious poem emphasises it. Fittingly *Pipes of Pan* comes next. Again a publication of the Coronation year, it is dedicated from British Guiana by John A. Parris, the author, to The Poetry Society, from whose address copies can be obtained.

This Society has a more definite link with *Troubadour No. 3* a Writers' Guild Publication edited by Kennedy Williamson of the Editorial Board (Guild House, Ross-on-Wye). Here is a periodical with many contributors, including Terence Heywood and Mr. Williamson himself. Another familiar name is that of B. R. Gibbs, who won a thousand dollar prize in America, and *Vision* (University of Pennsylvania) is a reproduction of it. Our congratulations go to Mrs. Gibbs. From America comes another work, highly praised over there — *St. Martin's Summer,* by Eleanor Sands Smith (Falmouth House, $2.50). There is a breath of elf-land in these poems — " . . . she must weep alone for a dead leaf in a pool." "*Now is the Winter*" (P.M. Publications, Heywood, Lancashire) follows naturally.

Pete Robins is a north-country man, a beginner who, surprisingly, is already so sophisticated that we can only hope he will become simpler.

Judith Bickle's fifth collection is entitled *Further Poems,* and Robert Hale (7s. 6d.) is the publisher. In her work there is fragrance — the fragrance of observation as well as imagination: she writes about love and the other human, often all too human, things. Some of her lines are memorable. "To A Husband" closes with the charming avowal that "trafficked street is empty . . . till I hear your feet." Another American prize publication is Lillian Everts' *In Time of Change* (Fairfield Press, New York). She is a critic of life: "You slip between the fingers of to-morrow while we are still malignant with to-day." We prefer her verses when she forgets all about ideas — and feels. Two recent books from publisher Stockwell are *Poems and Rhymes* by Herbert E. Pearce (10s. 6d.) and *The Stenographer's Prayer and Other Poems* by Eileen M. Egan (7s. 6d.). What is the stenographer's prayer?

Each time I type a manuscript
I'm praying on the keys,
The M's are all Hail Marys,
And the G's are Glory B's.

All poets should prefer to praise, and Mr. Pearce praises. Of an "old worn-out windmill" he remembers that "it did good service in the past, like many things that did not last."

The story of *Michael Angelo* has been re-told in excellent verse by Wilfrid Noyce (7s. 6d.), and from The Hand and Flower Press comes another volume of quality — *Fugitive Sonnets* by Merril Moore (3s. 6d.), again a proof of Miss Erica Marx's unique discrimination as a publisher. John Crowe Ransom, who bears an honoured name in the American poetry-world is the poet's sponsor. Mr. Ransom speaks with authority when he sums up the author as "an inevitable fountain of charming novelties," who has published himself "fully, delicately, and beautifully in a book composed entirely of sonnets, or quasi-sonnets."

A "verse essay" by Gerald Bromhead Walker, *Letter in a Bottle,* comes from Heinemann (8s. 6d.) whose publication follows Mr. Walker's prize-winning in the Arts Council Festival of Britain competition. The poet's approach is philosophical:

I have known pictures deep with passion
And symphonies that tear at Time.

He has a sense of beauty, and the sonnet form admirably suits his fluent, appreciative style. Some of his ninety skilfully-linked sonnets are memorable. Peter Russell, idealistic young publisher as well as poet, has sent out into the world an Irishman's book — *Life Arboreal,* by Ewart Milne (Pounds Press: 9s. 6d.). His work, Mr. Russell thinks, has attracted less attention than it deserves. This, his eighth volume, is a full explanation why. Contrariness is a handicap rather than an advantage:

I sing the dark sun in the heart of the rose,
And spit petals of green ice from my mouth.

From Ireland to Scotland, and we meet that old B.B.C. favourite announcer, Joseph Macleod. As "Adam Drinan" he has written *Script from Norway* (William Maclellan, 7s. 6d.). It is a poem of contrasts. Norway has won freedom, Scotland has still to do so, he tells us in musical, richly coloured verse. Few poems are written to-day with such passion, such enthusiasm for a Cause, and yet remain poetry. Profoundly religious, but not so passionate, is *The Cathedral,* by A. G. Chant (Epworth Press, 7s. 6d.). A cathedral, to the poet, is far more than an edifice in stone.

A collection of fifty-eight pieces, entitled *Existentialist Sonnets* (Montgomery

Company), will have its own appeal, especially to the adventuresome. D. Glyn Williams is a good enough poet to have chosen a title more appealing to the others. "It's in the night-time wisdom comes to me. Each night in sleep he knows what death can do." *The Vibrant Anvil,* by Archibald Sinclair (Maclellan, 3s. 6d.), and *Hurrying Seasons* by Herbert Stoneley (Sandiford, Wigan, 3s. 6d.), doubtless are making an appeal to still others. *The Forest and Other Poems,* by Marjorie Turner (St. Catherine Press, 7s. 6d.), reveals a sensitive nature whose reaction to all beautiful things make it easy to pay tribute to her. A similar tribute can be paid to Katherine Minta Garner for her *Poems of Three Shires and of the Sea* (Advance Publicity, Lincoln, 6s.). She expresses in a light, perhaps too facile way what her introducer calls "the wonder and joy of life." By contrast we round off these notes with *The Pool of Dreams,* by Patricia Wentworth. But the contrast is only technical. Miss Wentworth's work is like a happy brooklet.

Reprints of classic books to hand are: The selected poems of *Edmund Spenser* with an introduction by Richard Church, of *Thomas Gray,* introduced by John Rodgers, and of *John Milton,* introduced by Howard Sergeant, are from The Grey Walls Press and The Falcon Press (5s. each). *Poems by Christina Rossetti* comes from the same publishers, with an introduction by Robin Ironside (7s. 6d.). Parnassus Books, published by The Blue Book Company, Croydon, Surrey, now include Euripides' *The Cyclops* and *The Bacchanals* (3s. 6d.). Shelley and Dean Milman are the translators, and the editing has been done by Robert Whitehouse. Finally *The Poems of Sappho,* newly translated by P. Maurice Hill, is a Staples book (30s.). "Sappho gave to the world in poetry what Phidias adn Donatello gave in sculpture and Leonardo da Vinci in painting — perfection."

FRIDAY EVENINGS AT PORTMAN SQUARE

"The Battle for Beauty is Never Finally Won"

Here is a list of Programmes, arranged by the Readings Committee, for Friday evenings, 6-30 to 7-30 approx., between Easter and Mid-summer at 33 Portman Square — "Everybody Welcome." Admission 1s. Non-members 2s.

April	23	"St. George for Merrie England". A Reading: Esme Beringer and Wilton Cole.
	30	Review of the current *Poetry Review.* Editorial Board meet Readers.
May	7	"Our Own Poets." A. V. Stuart and Kennedy Williamson.
	14	Poems for Parents. Arranged by Lesley Deane and Kathleen Richardson.
	21	Special Night for Play Reading. (Arranged by Charles Doran.)
	28	Choral and Solo Speech. (Arranged by John Holgate), with students of The Guildhall School of Music.
June	4	Whit-Friday: no Reading.
	11	Margaret Rawlings reads poems of her own choice.
	18	The Welsh Tradition in Poetry. Alun Llewellyn.
	25	Personal Selection. Arranged by Martin Starkie.
July	2	Audience Night. Everybody invited to read their favourite poem, or their own (limit 3 minutes). (T. H. Foley in the Chair).

ORIOLE POETRY PRIZE AWARD:

THE BALLAD

By E. V. KNOX

I should be very sorry to have to define a Ballad precisely. It certainly has nothing to do with a Ballade, a very artificial though pleasing antique composition which, in its most rigid form, was not attempted by any entrant in this competition, although there were one or two easy variations of it. Professor Saintsbury puts the question: "Are romances and early epics conglomerates of ballad, or are ballads disintegrations of epics — romance episodes worked up into ballad form?" I cannot honestly say that he answers his own query.

Obviously the ballad is a narrative poem, but quite as obviously we do not describe all narrative poems as ballads. Otherwise, we should have to make the word embrace everything from Homer to "The Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo". Does not Chaucer usually write Ballads? Is "The Rape of Lucrece" a Ballad? Or "The Rape of the Lock"?

The term is usually applied to old and simple narrative verse dealing with battle or romance, especially Border or Scottish verse, often assisted by a refrain; but I agree that it need not be at all archaic. Nor can I see why there should be any definition that would rule out Tennyson's "Revenge" or Rudyard Kipling's "Rhyme of the Three Sealers". When it comes to "Sweeney Agonistes" I should hesitate.

Many competitors (and I have read all the entries) simply wrote poems; and I must congratulate the Oriole Group on their range and variety. Of these I like best "Who Can Love the Holly". "Ballad for the Free" shows a very considerable gift for ferocious satire. Turning to those that were ballads, I am in respectful agreement with Dr. Leigh Henry in his choice of the first four, and also of the three specially mentioned. But I must comment that if he had not, very rightly, ruled out ballads wholly derivative or imitative in language and form I should have been obliged to give very good marks to the Scottish "Ballad".

"The Ballad of the Mares" seems naturally to take, and I give it, first place because, though in theme and to some extent in language it has affinity to a most tempting model — Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" — it cannot be called derivative in the sense I give when reading the attempts at Border ballads. It was obviously written with a poetic emotion successfully conveyed, for the most part with poetic diction. I feel the more certain about it because I do not know the legend (if it be an actual one) and should not have naturally expected the apparition of two

white mares to cause either hatred or alarm, whereas the slaughter of an albatross wins more immediate imaginative response. There may be some symbolism here which escapes me.

More moving to me as a theme was "The Horn of Hun", which I should have had to place first had I been able to regard it as a true ballad. I do not rule it out because of its oriental theme and manner, but because it is passion in retrospect, and therefore, if my distinction is sound, is a lament or threnody. "Treorrin and the Dusky Maid" is strong, passionate, and certainly a poem, but not sufficiently direct in narrative form to have the quality of a ballad, which should not devote so much time to erotic memory.

Nearly always in these entries is far greater ability in the description of moods and the painting of scenery than in the conduct of the story, where far too often discordant words and phrases creep in. No word or phrase can be called alien to poetry, but some may easily jar in a given place in a particular poem.

"The Tale of Elydir" is a pleasant poem, properly in ballad form, but failing in three important narrative quatrains, 12, 13, and 14; while "Birkett's Eagle", certainly in sound ballad form and not too derivative, does not win any enthusiasm in the last three quatrains, where it ought to be most effective. The writer, having killed Lucifer and also Adam Birkett, seems to have done a day's work that demanded no more!

Finally, "A Ballad of Mistaken Identities" is a bold, bright effort, entirely modern, direct in story and language; but I am not enamoured of what I am obliged to call the moral. This seems to depend on the superior psychological reaction of a disembodied cavalier who prefers the ghost of a modern prostitute to one of his own period. This appears somewhat arbitrary. The whole treatment is intentionally light-hearted and jocose, but could have been better clinched with a not so whimsical end.

Let me apologize for these extremely personal comments which, had they not been in the main supported by your other judges, I should hardly have dared to make.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

"The Horn of Hun" (Ruth Tenney).
"Treorrin and the Dusky Maid" (Mark Bourne).
"The Tale of Elydir" (Morwyth Rees).
"Birkett's Eagle" (Dorothy Spring).
"A Ballad of Mistaken Identities" (John Blanford).
"Who Can Love the Holly" (Victor Musgrave).
"Ballad of the Free" (Gerda Mayer).
"Ballad" (Ruth Duffin).

Oriole Award: Mr. E. V. Knox's Choice . . .

THE BALLAD OF THE MARES

R. JOHN PORTCHMOUTH

It happened before the owl could shriek,
Before the fox could turn,
Before the hares of night could leap
Into the moonlit fern;
And the men who stood below the wood
Felt fear within them burn.

High on the valley's windless side
Where it leaned against the sky,
Where darkness roamed like a great night bird
As the clouds above blew by —
Black in the shadow of silent vows
Did Anselm's Abbey lie.

The walls that closed its secrets in
Were closed in sheltered gloom,
Except a tower that lifted up
A solitary room
Above the rock, to take the shock
Of the sea-wind's lusty boom.

Its ancient ruins, the watchers knew,
Were cloisters of the dead:
No hooded monks their holy Mass
Among the quiet stones read:
And their solemn knell was the windy bell
Rocking overhead.

It happened as the ringing stopped
Dead upon the blast:
It was as though the souls it mourned
Had reached their Rest at last.
But in its stead there came a dread
With horror unsurpassed.

The stricken valley fixed its eyes
Upward through the night
Where suddenly the ruined place
Vaulted into light;
Flames like a Hell in the ghostly shell
Burst blazing, fierce and bright.

Then as it sank — from the crimson glow
That burned the black hill side
There galloped two maned and wild white mares
Their plunging hoofs flung wide,
With one accord, they reared and soared
Riding the night's full tide.

But as the valley watched their beauty
White among the moon-clouds go,
They turned, as from the sky, and rode
To the river far below.
They rode with fleet and flashing feet
Like an avalanche of snow.

At the water's height they veered their flight
Fast down the shadowed stream;
And those who saw, from blind and door,
Cried out, "The Devil's Team!"
They held their breath till the beasts of death
Vanished like a dream.

The next night came: the pale sky
Gave birth to a paler moon;
And for the waiting fear-filled hearts
The darkness came too soon.
The calm was tense: each nerveless sense
To silence did attune.

Then all at once, where the shrouded hill
Its shrouded secret kept,
Far up — from the Abbey's clouded gate —
The mares, white-mounting, leapt,
And down the valley, down the river
To the hills of dawn they swept.

So another night, and more, drew down
The visitors of fear:
And those who waited, watched, grew pale —
Their faces fever-clear;
Till the minds of men turned back again
To the hunters that they were.

While the sun was high they set their traps
Down the valley, down the banks.
They trained their science and art against
The swift, white-flying flanks.
And as the day burned red away
They closed their silent ranks.

No mortal thing of foot or wing
Could have survived that night:
But when they came, riding in flame,
The mares turned left nor right,
But galloped straight into morning's gate
In a loveliness of light.

As the day drew on, to the river went
Quiet men and slow.
The sun shone warm, the waters gleamed
But the talk was dark and low.
When down the road towards them strode
A man they did not know.

As he approached they saw that he
Was dressed as a priest of God:
His suit was black; his hair was white;
He light and laughing trod.
They noticed that instead of shoes
He was with sandals shod.

"I am from a Church nearby,"
He said with gracious mien.
"And I was stirred by what I heard
To seek your valley green.
To know from you the story true
Of the visions you have seen."

They told him all and sought his aid
The strange things to destroy.
"I'll do what I can," said the holy man —
And smiled as would a boy.
At the Tavern Sign he drank their wine
And talked with an easy joy.

Till the stars spread out the palm of night
And the dark woods crouched to wait,
He spoke at length of the Devil's strength,
Then, when the hour was late,
He climbed the still and haunted hill
Alone, to the Abbey's gate.

The village below, by the moon's soft glow,
Saw his figure pass inside:
The monument of shadows hid
What their boding could not hide:
They knew that there, in the cold high air,
A living thing had died.

They waited along their terraced fear,
They watched unending hours:
But the Abbey withheld the doom it spell'd
Nor leased the dreaded Powers.
In peace it lay, till returning day
Flowed back with light and flowers.

As they moved back their separate ways
They dwelt in solemn prayers:
What fate had silenced him who faced
The fury of the mares?
Then to their wonder, sudden thunder
Caught them unawares.

Behind them, down the sunlit vale,
Passive in restraint,
The great white beasts of midnight came
Serenely radiant:
Between the beasts, step't gay the priest
Like a summer-suited saint.

As they approached, the crowd drew back —
The fear was in them still:
But the priest called out, "The fault was yours
To think that you could kill
Bright things that ride from Spirit's springs
On pure and spacious will.

"Because their beauty and their power
You could not understand,
Their noble life you meanly sought,
Their guiltless death you planned:
But Love they know: they melt as snow
In a warm lover's hand."

He led his charges by the river
Gently down the glade,
White in the light that fell like showers,
Bright in the sun-blown shade:
At the valley's end, where the far hills bend
They vanished: and all men prayed.

* * * *

As the yellow moon's ring filled with days
And the mares came not again,
Four men, with crosses, climbed the hill
To the Abbey's hushed domain.
A dark cloud lay across the day
Like a seeping purple stain.

In through the ruined walls they passed
(Their souls from Satan save!)
Under the doorway arched with gloom
Into the vaulted nave.
And in the shadows and the fear
Was the silence of the grave.

Passed column files, the musty aisles
Stole secretly away
To corners where the cold stones stared,
And the light was damp and grey.
And quiet things moved where darkness roof'd
The dim phantasmal day.

Down the hollow floor, the footsteps four
In slow succession fell,
And beneath their feet, the echoes beat
A thunder down to Hell.
But they must find what to mortal mind
The Dead their secrets tell.

Beside the altar's screen of dust
A narrow staircase dipp'd,
Coiling a steep abyss of night
Down to a soundless crypt.
And into the gloom (as to their tomb)
The four men blindly slipp'd.

They stood above their drumming hearts,
Listening . . . but nothing heard.
High up, through pale squares of light
A dim grey daylight stirred,
And showed, like wells, the sunken cells
In the deeper darkness blurred.

Reaching the holes from door to door
The searcher's fingers met
At last, by an entrance, near the floor
A chisell'd limestone, set.
The lichens green gave a ghostly sheen
To its surface, worn and wet.

And there, by its own corrosion's glow,
They traced the wording bare,
Like a rhyme from the fading walls of time,
Like a voice in vanished air.
"Lord God, to Thee, at Mary's knee,
I here inscribe my prayer.

"May I Thy Holy Order serve,
Though undeserving be,
And by Thy Love and Sacred Blood
At last come unto Thee;
Where legions bright and realms of light
Adore Thy Mystery.

"And may I, when I come above,
Bring to their Heavenly shares
Those who in the stables here
Are my dear duty's cares:
That I may be, for Eternity,
Thy Keeper of the Mares."

POETRY SOCIETY SPECIAL

A LUNCHEON
FOR ALL MEMBERS AND THEIR FRIENDS

Will be held at The English-Speaking Union, Dartmouth House, 37 Charles Street, Berkeley Square, London, W.1.

SATURDAY, 8TH MAY, 1954,

at 12.45 for 1.15. This is a Get-Together Luncheon, and applications for Tickets, 12s. 6d. each (exclusive of wines), should be made early, as the accommodation is limited.

Accompanied by a remittance, the applications must be addressed to Mrs. T. L. Adamson, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

In accordance with the Licensing Regulations the names and addresses of those who wish to attend must accompany their application, which can be made from 1st April onward.

Distinguished Visitors will be present, and the President and the General Council are the official hosts and hostesses.

REMEMBER THE DATE — SATURDAY 8TH MAY — AND EVERYBODY IS WELCOME.

PREMIUM COMPETITION: REPORT
NEW SERIES, No. 18

By ROBERT ARMSTRONG

This competition is not only a challenge to our members, but the prize, apart from its intrinsic value, distinguishes the recipient, and it has been rewarding to find the standard of poetry in these entries to be so high.

There was, it has to be confessed, still the occasional inversion to blemish a good poem, as though the poet was searching desperately for a rhyme. Also, more frequently, the hackneyed epithet was used when a freshly imaginative one would have been illuminating. Nevertheless every poem had a valid poetic impulse and I highly commend in particular Eveline Robbins for the mystical sweep of "Evolution", Janet Teylon Woods (Kenya) for the lyrical delight of "Fantasy" and I. Zuidema (Cape Town) for the astringent observation of his "Summer Journey Through The Karoo".

One poem stands out, however, by virtue of its creation of atmosphere and its technical accomplishment. It is "Hazards" by Edith Roseveare to which I award the prize. Keats said that "poetry should come like leaves to the tree", but behind the spontaneity of a fine poem is an

industrious mastery. So in this poem the metres devised by Alcæus, who wrote six hundred years before Christ, have been deftly used and modulated with splendid effect and fluency.

OTHERS COMMENDED

Mark Bourne (Montgomeryshire)
Mabel Parker (Cheshire)
Nancy Bryant (Kent)
Pamela Davis (London)
R. O. Marshall (Kent)
Ruth Partington (London)
E. M. Rooke (London)
Lillian Everts (New York)
Lou Morgan (Birmingham)
Margaret Lees (Cheshire)
Joyce Evelegh (Kent)
M. H. Tattersall (Sussex)
Jon Terry (London)

HAZARDS

EDITH ROSEVEARE

"The wind is freshening. Clouds from the Irish sea
Advance in convoy, laden with hail and rain.
What cargo, Lord, for land already
Weeping with water and rivers rising!

"The crops decay. Gold changes to black in fields
That mourn for sunshine. — When will the wind veer east?
What loss and hardship, labour wasted!
Ploughing and sowing to reap no harvest."

He stood there, silent; pitied the sodden soil,
Then glanced up skywards, saw a small patch of blue
And, almost happy, went off whistling,
Full of the promise, the weather changing.

I thought of Ithaca, of the isles of Greece,
Of Zante, Cephalonia, now lying in ruins;
The many hurt, homeless or dying,
Crying for water, their wells polluted,

And held my hand out, feeling the air like silk,
And loved this firm earth under the tattered sky
With clouds like doves, like grey doves straining,
Each with an olive-branch, straining westward.

CAN WE HELP YOU?

The answer is Yes to any Member who is anxious for the best advice about his or her work. The Poetry Society established a CRITICAL SERVICE some years ago, and writers are invited to make use of it.

Two poems may be submitted for criticism and help, for a minimum fee of 5s. The Charge for the criticism of each additional poem (under 100 lines) is 2s. It is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed and that a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT PRIZE ANTHOLOGY

The Poetry Society is now able to announce a new Anthology of Prize Verse. Poets everywhere are invited to submit a Poem for possible inclusion.

The Editor of the Anthology is the President and Chairman of the Editorial Board. He will judge the quality of the various poems submitted in accordance with the terms of an Alice Hunt Bartlett bequest. The late Mrs. Bartlett, one-time American Editor of *The Poetry Review*, empowered her Executors to arrange for this Prize Competition open to Members of the Society.

1. All poems must be typewritten, with the author's name and address on the front page of the MS., along with a bracketed membership number. *This is important.*

2. No poet may submit more than two poems, any length up to 200 lines: any subject, any form. Poems published in *The Poetry Review* may also be drawn upon at the Editor's discretion.

3. Entries cannot be returned, so no stamp or addressed envelope is required. Enquiries will not be welcomed, nor is correspondence desired. The Editor's decision is final, and cannot be revealed to the individual competitor.

4. Every poet whose work is accepted will share the prize, the amount of which depends on circumstances prevailing at the time of the anthology's circulation.

5. Entries must be addressed: "The Editor, Alice Hunt Bartlett Anthology," 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Last day for submitted work: 31st May, 1954.

THE ALBERT RALPH KORN POETRY AWARD

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing that through the generosity of Mr. Albert Ralph Korn, of New York, a deep lover of poetry and a distinguished American, a new and substantial annual Award is offered to Members in any part of the world.

A prize of Twenty Pounds will be given for the best poem in English. It must be original, previously unpublished, and not longer than thirty-two lines. There is no restriction in the choice of subject and poetic form.

The judges will be appointed by The Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review*. One poem only must be submitted by any one poet, and all entries typewritten. The manuscript must be sent anonymously, with the author's name and address accompanying it in a sealed envelope. No MSS can be returned. Closing date for the first year's award is extended to 30th June, 1954.

The outer envelope must be addressed to "Albert Ralph Korn Award, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1., England."

LILIAN BOWES LYON POETRY AWARD

To honour the memory of the late Lilian Bowes Lyon it is The Poetry Society's privilege to invite the submission of original verse by Scottish poets anywhere in the world. Prizes of £5, £3, and £2 will be awarded annually for those poems considered most felicitous, and it is hoped that a selection from the entries may be read publicly.

No poem must exceed thirty lines: dialect is not barred, although the non-Scottish reader must be taken into consideration by the author — the judges will certainly do so — and the competitor's name and address must accompany the MS, but separately in a sealed envelope. Closing date for the second year's award is 30th June, 1954, and entries must be addressed to Prize Award (Lilian Bowes Lyon), The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, England.

DENT

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ORIOLE POETRY PRIZE

ORIOLE (the Poets' Group of the Poetry Society) offer an annual prize of £5 this year for a Conversation Piece of not more than thirty-two lines, previously unpublished. The competition is open to all; entrance fee 2s. 6d. per entry. The adjudicators reserve the right to divide the prize, or to withhold it, if in their estimation no entry is of sufficient merit. Competitors must adopt a pseudonym. This should be written in block capitals on the manuscript and on a sealed envelope containing the entrant's name and address. MSS. will not be returned. The winning poem will appear in *Poetry Review*. Closing date 31st July, 1954. Address: Oriole Prize, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London W.1., England.

THE LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS SONNET COMPETITION FOR 1954

The Poetry Society has the pleasure of announcing the fifth Annual Competition in memory of Lord Alfred Douglas for a sonnet upon any subject. One of the two forms adopted by Lord Alfred Douglas in his sonnets, must be used; these are:

For the Octave — 1, 2, 2, 1; 1, 2, 2, 1.

For the Sextet — 3, 4, 5; 3, 4, 5 *or* 3, 4; 3, 4; 3, 4.

The prize of £10, which is generously offered each year by the Marquess of Queensbury, may be divided at the discretion of the adjudicator. The winning poem or poems will be published with the award in *The Poetry Review*. Competitors must retain copies of their poems as these cannot be returned. The sonnets should bear a definite title and not merely marked "Sonnet". Not more than two sonnets may be submitted by each competitor by 30th June, 1954. Address "Sonnet Competition", The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Entries should bear names and addresses of competitors. No previously published poem may be entered.

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITIONS FOR 1954

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of £20 as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed "The Greenwood Prize", 33 Portman Square London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editorial Board, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*. Closing date is 31st August, 1954.

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION

The above competition continues as before with the total entrance fees as prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired. (See Rule 3.)
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed "Premium Competition", *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize twice will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
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PORTMAN SQUARE—HAPPY NEW YEAR

Christmas seems a long way behind us now, but lively memory gratefully recalls the fine reading of "Songs of Sea and Land" in December. Duncan Macintyre was superb in his native ballads and Kipling; Kelty MacLeod shone clear in Robert Frost. What graces our young aspirants to verse-speaking may learn from such complete artistry! Not a seat should be empty on these occasions.

Instead of the customary Nativity play, Charles Doran ended the season with *God's Promises* by John Bale (the sixteenth century abbot of Ossory, who also attempted the earliest historical play, *King John*). This quaint piece, spoken by an all-male cast, was chiefly remarkable for its presentation of the God-figure as a very crusty old gentleman indeed, conspicuously lacking in the Christmas spirit; which very peevishness tended to lighten the medieval austerity so admirably conveyed by Charles Doran senior.

Spring's promises brought us a recital from Margaret Rawlings. Sportsmanship may seem a strange expression to use in connection with poetry reading, but what other so aptly describes the good spirit which prompted the Misses June Franklin, Vivienne Sewell and Elizabeth Brough to keep the ball rolling until Miss Rawlings was able to get away from the importunate film cameras which delayed her? The large audience was fully appreciative and when Miss Rawlings arrived what a feast they gathered! The warm, beautiful voice, for all its glamorous quality, eschewed all titivation of the poetry it so truly loves and faithfully serves. Surely, it is this innate generosity which has drawn such a vast audience to Margaret Rawlings's "Heartsease" radio programmes.

The Review of The Poetry Review went well; almost too well. Active and constructive criticism are vital to this programme, which is not designed to be a mutual admiration contest. Odette Tchernine and Alun Llewellyn read their poems from the current number and the Rev. Pratt-Green spoke up for the new poets. Since these are, presumably, not dumb, how about them saying a word for themselves now and then?

One audience certainly did, at the end of January, when any individual having a pet poem of his own or another's was let loose for three minutes to give it all he had. Perhaps one should say *she* had, since the majority of readers were feminine. Many original verses came to light, and some old favourites too. Stephen Graham provided a salty touch from Don Marquis, and Vivian Burbury some poignant observation of slum children. The Chairman, Tom Foley, called for a future occasion for self-expression on behalf of the gathering, which after an hour and a half was reluctant to break up.

In February Miss Gertrude Pickersgill, Principal of the London School of Dramatic Art, brought a garland of students with her whose budding talents lost nothing of their bloom for being modestly presented. The clarity of diction these young people already possess greatly pleased the audience and was the occasion of compliment to their Head by the Chevalier Kyle.

A Brains Trust — or, as the Chairman, John Graddon preferred to call it — a Panel, faced up to one hundred questions about poetry the following week. Of necessity, many queries had to be telescoped, but a wide field was covered during the hour with occasional impromptus from listeners which added much to the interest of the evening. Kathleen Richardson, Kennedy Williamson, and the President formed the Panel, and Mr. Williamson's brilliant exposition of the sonnet forms gained spontaneous applause. But why not allow the "experts" a previous glance at the questions? Surely, a considered answer gives more satisfaction to everyone; especially when the questions have obviously been carefully and cunningly prepared! In their selection of poems drawn from the tradition of six hundred years, Violet Adamson and Charles Doran reminded us of many a familiar quotation. Mr. Doran's reading of D. H. Lawrence and Charlotte Mew's *The Farmer's Bride* were so sensitive as to leave us with a slightly ungrateful regret that he had not given us more from the nineteen-fifties as well. Mrs. Adamson brought dignity and clear diction to her part of this lovingly chosen programme.

Late in February the Society heard a condensed version of D. J. Hall's epic poem

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The Phoenix Flower. This was an interesting experiment, not too easy, one imagines, for the readers (Lesley Deane, Richard Ainley and Alun Llewellyn) since the first impact of the quieter narrative form presents fewer highlights to the audience than purely dramatic poetry does. The listeners will have an opportunity for testing and experimenting during the Spring Readings, as we hear that another Audience Night has been arranged in answer to enthusiastic appeal.

No member should neglect to book 8th May when celebrities from all over will dazzle our post-prandial eyes and ears (see below). K.V.R.

POET'S PLEASURE

NEWS FROM THE CENTRES

By the Editorial Staff

News from the Centres? News *for* the Centres this time — to begin with, anyway, because it is very important indeed that members everywhere should be reminded of The Poetry Society's Get-Together luncheon, announced in detail elsewhere in this issue. The President will welcome guests at the beautiful home of The English-Speaking Union, Dartmouth House, 37 Charles Street, Berkeley Square, London, W.1, on Saturday, 8th May, at 12.45 p.m. for 1.15 p.m. Distinguished visitors will be present, and members are invited to bring their friends.

Applications for tickets, 12s. 6d. each (exclusive of wines), must be addressed to Mrs. T. L. Adamson, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. A remittance must accompany the application, and early booking is advisable because the accommodation is limited. In accordance with the licensing regulations the names and addresses of all attending the luncheon must be sent with the request for tickets.

Centres will be well-advised to organize coach-parties.

* * *

Because a major activity of The Poetry Society, the Auditions in Verse Speaking, is carried on outside London as well as at Portman Square it may interest the Centres to have from time to time the names of the special Committee responsible for the organizing of this good and most rewarding work. They include the Misses Marjorie Lyon, Mollie Hudson, Dorothy Robinson and Roberta Shuttleworth, and Wilton Cole, John Holgate, E. Guy Pertwee and L. A. G. Strong, with John Graddon and Thomas Moult *ex-officio*. The Examiners are, in addition to the ladies named above, the Misses Ann Clark, Mary Cole, Jean Hamilton and Marjorie Sherborne.

GUILDFORD

From this active Surrey Centre comes the first news of the season's activities. The hon. secretary is Mrs. Coker (address for enquiries, 20 Litchfield Way) and her January report includes a programme by Mrs. S. N. Edwards, well known as Pamela Corbett. Her reading was of poems chosen by herself, mainly of gardens, ranging from the Garden of Eden to the present-day cultivation of flowers and plants. Among the selections was Cardinal Newman's "Definition of a Garden", and a humorous piece by Miss Shuttleworth. In February, John Holgate lectured on Rudyard Kipling, "Writer of Great Verse". Mr. Holgate emphasised a characteristic of Kipling's work that often passes the reader by — his love of the Common Man. Programmes by Angela Malleson and William Kean Seymour were other features of the Guildford season.

SUFFOLK

Sir Francis Meynell gave a splendid send-off to the new year's work at this prosperous Centre. His reading of "Religious Poetry" was made especially fascinating by the poems he selected from Emily Brontë, Mary Coleridge, Henry Vaughan "the Silurist", Francis Thompson, and Alice Meynell, Sir Francis's gifted mother. The "night was wild", but that did not keep the members away. They owe a good deal to the enthusiasm of the Hon. Secretary, Miss K. M. Turner, who welcomes inquiries at 18 Willoughby Road, Ipswich.

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The April number of The European *is a special poetry number with poems by* PETER WHIGHAM, DENIS GOACHER, ALAN NEAME, EDWIN MORGAN, DESMOND STEWART, RICHARD APPLETON, ERIC HAUGAARD.

Contents also include articles on Politics, Economics, Books, Theatre, Food, etc.

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WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE

The Poetry Society has been a "nursery" for many young poets who have made good, and a happy reminder of this splendid achievement in its history was given at the Walton and Weybridge Centre, when Mr. Dorian Cooke read his Greenwood Prize Poem (see *The Poetry Review*, July–September, 1953). Mr. Cooke also gave pleasure by reading from a "Personal Anthology".

For another memorable evening the Centre, which is proud of its President, Mr. Wilfrid Gibson (Mrs. Elsie M. Gittens, hon. secretary), has been indebted to Mr. Kenneth Lillington. He took the chair for a discussion on Wordsworth, and the Hon. Mrs. George, Mrs. Helena McBean and Mr. John Gittens were the speakers. The opening programme for 1954 featured Mr. Robert Armstrong, of the Society's Executive Council, and again Wordsworth was the subject. After giving what was pronounced "a brilliant address" Mr. Armstrong was asked by the audience to read his own verse.

All inquiries about the Centre's activities should be addressed to 28 Oatlands Drive, Weybridge.

SYDNEY (AUSTRALIA)

Winter in England is summer in Australia, and the sunlit news of our Queen's visit over there has come to us at the same time as another sort of sunny news, news of the Sydney Poetry Centre's inauguration — the Queen and poetry, a happy blend.

Miss Carol M. Foote, who was present at the first meeting, wrote to the organizer a letter whose tone augurs well for the future of the Centre. "What a tremendous and exciting thing it is for Sydney and the whole of Australia!

"Coming from England two years ago," Miss Foote continued, "I have found that the arts are so genuinely appreciated, and listening to the poetry reading by Imogen Whyse at your opening meeting was an inspiration, and undoubtedly will be so to many poets. They could not wish to have their words understood more perfectly, or more intelligently — and given to the public with so much beauty and delicacy. I am sure this venture will be a success. It has been Miss Whyse's ambition for many years, and with her miraculous energy, and her unfailing devotion to the Australian arts — and her own exquisite talents, how could it be otherwise?"

Our footnote to this "how-could-it" is a congratulatory one to Miss Whyse (The Attic Studio, 217A George St., Sydney), and a joyful affirmative.

NOVA SCOTIA

For our go-ahead Centre in this issue we cross the Atlantic. The headquarters of the Nova Scotia organization are at Halifax, where Mrs. Havestock (12 Ogilvie Street) is the "recording secretary". Fortunately we can afford the necessary space for once, and give details of the most recent activities. The meetings are held monthly, except in summer, at the homes of members. "They are," says Mrs. Havestock, "our prime endeavour, thoughtfully planned for entertainment as well as instruction."

Dr. Watson Kirkconnell, President of Acadia University, has spoken on the nineteenth century Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz, the centenary of whose death will be observed next year. Dr. Kirkconnell, who has published *A Golden Treasury of Polish Verse*, is now working on a translation of Mickiewicz's greatest work, *Pan Tadeusz*, in heroic couplets. Sister Maura, Professor of English at Mount Saint Vincent College, Halifax, lectured on "The Spoken Word", and Miss Marion Dauphinee, Principal of the Halifax Ladies' College, spoke on "Modern Verse and Poetry", with the final accent on Free Verse. Mrs. E. Beckford, a member, gave a talk on technique and diction in verse, and the poetry of G. K. Chesterton was the subject of Father Daniel Fogarty's talk. Father Fogarty is Professor of English of St. Mary's University, Halifax. Professor Allan Bevan, of Dalhousie University, charmed his hearers with the poetry of Scharmel Iris.

During 1953 there were ten general and four executive meetings. A Youth Poetry Contest was organized, and also a national contest: one of the features of a very successful year was the publication of another Chap Book, *Nova Scotia Book of Verse, Vol. III.*

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BOSTON (U.S.A.)

Characteristically warm-spirited in paying tribute to outstanding worth and distinction, this famous U.S.A. Centre celebrated ("with full hearts") the seventy-ninth birthday (21st November, 1953) of that grand old Dean of American Letters, Charles Hammond Gibson. One of the founders and oldest members, Mr. Gibson is regarded by many across the Atlantic as the American Poet Laureate. "He has written more poems in honour of royalty and famous Englishmen than any other American," writes Miss Blanche T. Bigelow, the Centre secretary, from 163 Eliot Street, Milton 87, Massachusetts. This wonderful septuagenarian actually read some of his own early sonnets and later poems at the birthday meeting. The Poetry Society has saluted you, Mr. Gibson, from our headquarters in London.

At the same November meeting a member, Mrs. Robert D. Chellis, gave an account of her Coronation visit to London. She visited 33 Portman Square. "So recent an account of the English life of our Poetry Society drew us nearer to the source of inspiration," the secretary writes. Mrs. Chellis also met Dallas Kenmare, "one of the best writers of the day: and we are able to regard her as a friend, albeit a recent one."

VANCOUVER

This veteran Centre is now in its thirty-first year, and Mrs. Irene H. Moody (4371 Erwin Drive, Cypress Park, B.C., Canada) asks: "Are there many Centres holding a similar record?" Writing on behalf of the members Mrs. Moody expresses great pleasure "to see *The Poetry Review* becoming stronger and more influential in spite of all the adversities." She adds a message to "an old friend": "We hope that Chevalier Kyle is well and able to face life without his helpmate, whose loss must have been a shattering blow."

Unfortunately the Centre has itself experienced a shattering blow. The members have lost a popular colleague, an "out-of-town" member, J. G. Somerville. Once Mr. Somerville had maintenance charge of Westminster Abbey and the Royal Mint, London, being a Scotsman by birth — Kineardex, and his sisters and grandchildren still live north of the Tweed. Admiral Lord Cunningham and his brother, General Sir A. Cunningham, were Mr. Somerville's cousins.

Mrs. Irene H. Moody, the Centre director, contributed by long-distance telegraph a message to be read at the graveside, in Nanaimo, where her late colleague used to reside. After recalling that his happy and attractive writings had earned him a title that will remain in the Centre's memory always — "Spinner of Beautiful Song" — Mrs. Moody said that his courage and spirit throughout his long illness had endeared him to all. " 'Spinner' was a poet with a following in every walk of life. We are the better for having known him, and we shall miss him and his verse."

Note—For Directory of Centres see Jan–March number — and our next.

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Prelude — The Earth Still Fair	131
Dylan Thomas, Portrait-drawing by Michael Ayrton	135
Two Poems, Phoebe Hesketh	136
Rascal Song, A. E. Coppard	137
Ah, the South London Landscape . . . Paul Selver	137
The Grave of Cronos, Alun Llewellyn	138
In Miniature, Michael Ivens	140
Narcissus Revisited, Emanuel Litvinoff	140
In the Country, John Bayliss	141
Two Poems, Dannie Abse	142
Beauty and Age, Constance Greystan	143
To Venus, Kenneth Hare	144
Reunion, Teresa Hooley	144
The Stunt (a Manuscript found in a bottle)	145
A Loss to Poland — and the World, by Jack Lindsay	147
I Have Seen, Wrey Gardiner	150
Night Journey, Michael Thomas	150
John Milton, Iain Crichton Smith	151
Elegy, Margaret Haley Carpenter	152
Revelation, Ruth E. Thurley	152
Autumn Came to Paris, Godfrey Turton	153
Accidie, Peter Dunn	154
The Cathedral of Milano, Marie Tello Phillips	154
The Swans Returned, Harriet Plimpton	155
In Arden, Margaret Sheppard Fidler	156
Quiet Beauty, Wilfrid Thorley	157
False Gods, Robert McKinnon	158
The Eternal Adam, Rosa Waugh Hobhouse	158
The Laurel Crown, by Elizabeth Douglas	159
The Poem that Influenced Me, by Sir Herbert Read	162
"Dear Editors — ", Wilfrid Thorley, Kenneth Hare, Herbert Palmer	162
Under Milk Wood, Yes and No, by Stephen Pike and Stuart Holroyd	164

A Novel in Verse, by Stephen Graham 167
Ancient and Modern, by Geoffrey Johnson 169
Round the Globe, by Robert Armstrong 171
Strewn on the Wind, by Kathleen Valmai Richardson 172
Zest and Abandon, by John Graddon 173
The Quiet Heart, by John Graddon 173
Two Voices from Overseas, by Geoffrey Johnson 174
Poetry All Sorts, by the Editorial Staff 174
Poetry on Records, by John Graddon 177
Towards Parnassus: The Greenwood Prize Award, by Geoffrey Johnson 178
Premium Competition Award, by F. Pratt Green 179
Autumn Leaves in the River, Mark Bourne 180
Albert Ralph Korn Prize 181
Portman Square — Spring Song 182
At Luncheon on 8th May, by Odette Tchernine 183
"Our Guests", William Kean Seymour 184
Poet's Pleasure: News from the Centres 187

TO WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTORS

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3. Reasonable margins and top space should be left.
4. A self-addressed envelope must always be enclosed either stamped or, if an overseas contributor, the Coupon-Response International. Otherwise, no MSS will be considered. Loose stamps cannot be regarded as a substitute. Except in rare instances an introductory letter is not necessary.
5. In their own interest writers should notice that poems over thirty lines in length have a very doubtful chance of acceptance.
6. If helpful editorial suggestions are made with a returned MS, please do not reply challenging the advice. Requests for criticism, moreover, are not invited. It should be remembered that The Poetry Society already has a well-organized service for expert advice, as announced in each issue.
7. Not more than four poems should be submitted at one time. Two is an ideal number.
8. The Editorial Board does not accept responsibility for the safe custody and return of any unsolicited MSS. Authors are requested not to write expressing anxiety lest their MS is lost in the post. MSS are seldom or never lost in the post.
9. Acceptance or rejection of a MS cannot reasonably be expected until at least three months have elapsed. A decision may take longer. Inquiries by telephone cannot be dealt with.
10. The receipt of a proof does not necessarily imply immediate publication.

Next Issue—

Dr. Marie Stopes, Wilfrid Wilson Gibson,
Lady Margaret Sackville,
AND THE GREENWOOD PRIZE POEM

These pages — An Offering to

ALFRED NOYES

Yea, our God grows young.
Here, now, the eternal miracle is renewed.
Now, and for ever, God makes heaven and earth.

Prelude . . .

THE EARTH STILL FAIR

"Pray silence for The Man Who Came to Luncheon." So might Robert Morley have been announced as he rose to respond to the toast, "Our Guests", at the luncheon held in May by The Poetry Society. Mr. Morley, who gained his early fame and (we hope) fortune in the London theatre with a roaring play entitled *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, asked us in a delectable speech of characteristic wit and humour how are we going to put the world right through poetry if poets cannot be understood? A straightforward question, and, apart from the assumption that poets want to put the world right, there must be thousands of people who, like Mr. Morley, find themselves repelled by the foggy pretentiousness of certain contemporary verse-writers ("lapsing into the kind of half-rhyme that is not an intentional subtlety," suggests *The Times Literary Supplement*, "but a careless miss"), among them a very tantalizing American, e. e. cummings, who refuses to spell his name with initial capitals.

Lavish indeed is mr. cummings with lines like this: "What if a much of a which of a wind". Fortunately the real poets are not cummingses, and there must be many readers who have remembered that the origins of Poetry were in minstrelsy. Woe betide a minstrel who sang vague words to a vague musical accompaniment when his immediate purpose was to sing for his supper. Unless these origins are to be totally discarded — and who dare propose it! — it is surely necessary that the qualities for which Poetry is the greatest thing the English genius has made should have at least some place in the poems of our time.

* * *

"When a great thought comes to earth, it is clothed in appropriate words. Then the great lines are like ships coming over the sea of time." Thus spake Homer, and, believing it one of the hard rules of verse we must not fear, The Poetry Society's strong endeavour is to uphold it, through the medium of *The Poetry Review* especially. Hilaire Belloc's modern definition is hardly different: "Where the great currents

of the soul run full and heavy, then, under the restraint of form, they will but run more proudly and more strong."

This, however, is not to deny the right of every poet or would-be poet to express himself in his or her own way, and because poets are human, whether they wish to be or no, their ways are devious. One way is straight, another crooked, some are muddled, others hopelessly obscure, probably to the poet's admirers also, though they wouldn't admit it. A verse-writer may be passionate or coldly intellectual, but all that can reasonably be asked of him is that his aim and hope shall be for The Earth Still Fair, and human life no mean, grovelling thing. This, we suggest, is what Shelley intended when he declared that poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.

* * *

But broadmindedness stops short of allowing Poetry to descend to the level apparently reached in certain other arts. For example, here is what the critic of *The Times* newspaper said about the London exhibition of Paul Klee's drawings:

> Klee's impeccable sense of touch is apparent in the slightest scratch that he made on the paper, and even when these drawings seem the most casual of doodles — many of them are a good deal more than that — they are obviously and invariably the doodles of an artist.

Chips from an artist's workshop are often worth collecting, of course, but an uncannily acute perception is required of us if "doodlings" or their equivalent in other arts are to be anything but meaningless.

* * *

Obscurity, of course, is quite another thing, and Mr. Morley will be interested to learn that when a good Friend of Poetry in America, the generous Mr. A. Ralph Korn, to whom we are already indebted for much, recently circulated a questionnaire on Clarity versus Obscurity in Poetry the collective response was significant. More than 700 answers were received, 612 unreservedly in favour of clarity, and 28 in favour of clarity with reservations. (Further to this, see page 181.)

Comments accompanying the affirmatives included one from a university professor who wrote: "I want an author's conclusions, not his confusions." And "an English clergyman who recently won the Queen's Medal for Poetry" wrote that he entirely disapproves of obscurity in a poem — "I almost feel the writer is offering me an insult."

But what is obscurity? Not necessarily the meaningless — and incidentally there are certain kinds of clarity that can be meaningless too . . . So far as The Poetry Society is concerned there is only one working principle: that the poet's right to any form of technical expression must be admitted so long as his aim and hope are for The Earth Still Fair.

* * *

Meanwhile we have to thank the public prints which noticed a

memorable Luncheon: especially *The Scotsman, The Liverpool Daily Post,* and *The Manchester Guardian,* the witty source of our opening pseudonym for Mr. Morley. On another page is a report by one of our valued members, Odette Tchernine, followed by an abridged version of William Kean Seymour's metrical "Toast" to the Guests of Honour.

On the eve of Dame Sybil Thorndike's departure with Sir Lewis Casson to Australia, where she is giving poetry recitals, Dame Sybil wrote: "I feel that many people must have been helped to a greater understanding of Poetry by the Society, and I would like to say thank you for myself and my family." Messages also read were from the Lord Justice Sir Norman Birkett and others, including Laura Smithson, well-loved and well-remembered by old theatregoers, who sent greetings from a sick-room. Cables arrived from The Poetry Society of America and Professor Nevil Coghill (but this was too late to be read). Miss Smithson wrote:

> My earliest memories are of my Mother reading simple child poems to me in a beautifully modulated voice. She told me that I would ask at the end: "Say it again." So for me poetry became absorbing, intoxicating. I was thrilled when in 1907 I learnt that there was a Poetry Society. I joined it immediately. And I have to confess that I never dare to begin reading a long poem late at night. I would never get to sleep!

Miss Smithson fears that many people think she is dead. "Perhaps you will deny this rumour, and at the Luncheon think of me wishing you an enchanting time. And turn down the glass where I should have made one."

* * *

Before we change to other subjects our appreciation of helpful comments made recently on The Poetry Society's activities must be offered to *The Writer,* a gallant and most helpful monthly for young journalists whose Editor seldom fails to pay us tribute. And to *The Daily Telegraph* and *John O'London's Weekly* ("There is a comfortable, well-nourished air about *The Poetry Review* . . . It seems to have acquired new vigour: it prefers tradition to experiment, but no one can call it dull.") *The Times Literary Supplement* has our thanks also. In a half-column review it speaks of our quarterly as more firmly established than any other poetry magazine now in existence.

* * *

So sudden is the rise to "fame" nowadays — we refer to prose-writers rather than to poets, of course — that the younger generation must be inclined to forget that for ninety-something out of a hundred authors whatever prosperity they achieve has been preceded by long years of struggle, hardship, and neglect. In the popular imagination the publication of each new book in the career of a well-known author is an event to

be envied, with friends and admirers crowding round, enthusiastic toasts and affectionate send-offs being the order of a glamorous day.

Virginia Woolf, one might think, had a share in this experience again and again during her literary life. But her posthumously published *Writer's Diary* (Hogarth Press, 18s.) gives the sorry truth. In 1925 her book, *The Common Reader,* was issued. Here is the entry in the diary that records it: "Nobody has written to me or spoken about it or in any way acknowledged the fact of its existence . . . a dull, chill, depressing reception: and complete failure." Then, in 1940, of a book that appeared at the topmost height of her fame: "Complete silence surrounds that book. It might have sailed in the blue and been lost. 'One of our books did not return,' as the B.B.C. puts it."

* * *

Through the death of the Marquess of Queensberry we have lost one of our friends and benefactors, and the Sonnet Competition, with an annual award that was offered to the memory of Lord Alfred Douglas, appears in this number under another title. Mr. Howard Parsons has generously taken it over, and particulars are given on Page 181.

* * *

"A difficulty with which we are now coping has arisen from the similarity of the names of The Poetry Society and The Poetry Book Society, a new organization named with seemingly no regard for the likelihood that sooner or later any resemblance to The Poetry Society's copyrighted title was bound to lead to confusion."

This is a quotation from the President's address at the Annual Meeting of The Poetry Society in May. The likelihood became a certainty with the appearance of the first selections by the new organization. Will our members please note?

* * *

Postscripts. — To Mr. John Arlott, in whose possession is the original of Michael Ayrton's brilliant portrait-drawing of the late Dylan Thomas, his friend, our best thanks and our felicitations . . . The latest recipient of the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry is Ralph Hodgson, who has not resided in this country since the early nineteen-twenties! . . . Controversy has occupied a deal of space in *The Daily Telegraph* about the rival merits of the verse of the thirties and the verse of the fifties. One correspondent speaks of Dylan Thomas as "our only great and pure poet of this century," but Mr. F. L. Lucas, a distinguished contributor to *The Poetry Review*, gently recalls the comment of a Chinese scholar "with the unhurried wisdom of his race" when asked if he thought the French Revolution a great step in human progress: "Is it not a little soon to say?" THE EDITORIAL BOARD.

DYLAN THOMAS, by MICHAEL AYRTON

TWO POEMS

PHOEBE HESKETH

THE SWIFTS

The swifts descend the twilight bends of air
Between dark beeches on this summer night;
And looping up the dusk with bows of flight,
They poise a moment pinioned breathless where
All movement is suspended in delight.

Then surging downward with their seed-pearl cries
They thread the night with ecstasy of sound
Till the listening earth is threaded with the skies,
And the arch of night comes curving on the ground.
Swept to a peak of air on mating wing,
They pin us to a pinnacle of joy
Where vanished petals of a fallen Spring
Unfold beyond all power to destroy.

IN PRAISE OF DARKNESS

Maternal darkness wraps my mind in peace,
For darkness is the cradle of the earth
And curtains aching light from infant eyes —
Dark is the womb that brings a star to birth.

Darkness is my comfort and my friend
And knowledge that change must be towards the light;
Darkness is the inn at the world's end,
Strong arms that fold the tired day with night.

Dark was the hour that heard the first command:
"Let there be light!" Obedient darkness fled
To be a backcloth to the rising land,
A foil for stars that glittered overhead.

Darkness takes my hand when lamps confound
My journey down this labyrinth of days.
Out of the dark I came to search all ways;
Into the dark I go where light is found.

RASCAL SONG

A. E. COPPARD

I love you at the times we love,
  Sure, I could do no less!
But not a globule more, my dove,
  To swell in promises;
For you are fickle, nor am I
  In this to be defended,
So do me right, as I do you:
  Least said is soonest mended.

That constancy which you profess
  I'll study to ignore;
No angel tongue could promise less,
  No liar promise more.
I might love you for ever, love,
  Were faith in each so blended,
But I am I and you are you:
  Least said is soonest mended.

AH, THE SOUTH LONDON LANDSCAPE . . .

PAUL SELVER

Ah, the South London landscape: ahead, on the right,
A bowshot beyond the humped canal-bridge, mark
That brace of causeways, each one a tree-bordered arc
Which steeply thrusts to the skyline — entrancing sight!

Listen: that wail, like a snatch of Celtic dirge
Keening near by: a goods-train. See, below
This parapet: it crawls through a cutting. A row
Of Victorian villas is perched on the grassy verge.

Yes, all is here as of old in an age less tense,
Pre-pin-table, pre-wireless, pre-I.Q.
Look yonder and you'll glimpse that gap in the fence
Where once we used to scramble for a view
Of the tunnel's begrimed and ulcerous gullet, whence
Hurtled expresses with coifs of umbery hue.

THE GRAVE OF CRONOS

ALUN LLEWELLYN

"Demetrius said . . . over against Britain . . . there is an island in which Cronos is imprisoned with Briareus keeping guard over him as he sleeps; for, as they put it, sleep is the bond forged for Cronos." Plutarch: *On The Fallacies of Oracles.*

They say, beyond the shores that westward lie
fronting the surges of the ocean-tide
where skies rest on the world's extremity
there sleeps an island man has never trod.

So tells Demetrius, that grave traveller
who followed the sun's wings to their folded fall
upon the torque-rim of the darkened waves
where light gathered itself like the quiet gull
and sunset balanced and dwindled on the night.

It is the place where Time himself lies dead,
Cronos, the god immortal most of all
immortals; dead. Robed like an emperor
he sits, crowned with captured stars and throned
on the crystal day that's shaped in the prism of ice;
without breath yet without dissolution, still
but, in his very immobility
holding firm like a sceptre of invisible rule
that pulseless being which lives beyond all life,
sharing nothing of its impermanent warmth
but containing all things mortal within its own
cold, deathly-undying hand.

I think this is
the parable they preach, those dwellers in
oceans that stretch beyond the Herculean
gates and touch, under vast skies Hyperborean,
the limits of the world. For we who live
in the world's centre, nursed by the inland sea
contained by changeless and discoverable shores,
see Time like the face of Caesar, a known authority
whose rule is plain, familiar to our lives
and wearing along with us. But the strange seas
whose waves run from the breast of heaven, that mount
to frozen isles where the sun hangs frozen too —
those seas, I say, drop before human eyes

the faceless veil of that Eternity
which watches time and knows it as no more
than the unfolding and the withering of a leaf.

Take sail with me (Demetrius says) and steer
beyond the shifting Cassiterides
westward and north past shores of iron, black
and smoothed with the incessant sea-tempering:
there the grey ocean-monsters bark and sheer
above the wave-heave, taking the tides of wind
with prow-beak and the rowing sweep of wing,
the multitude of gulls gathers and gives
the white mists motion and a wailing voice.
Day after day the limitless sea, labouring,
comes in long cadence from the walled sky
and light in cold reverberation wakens
a seethe of steel under an iron air.
No earth, for the land is drowned; no fire, for dark
night takes Apollo by the hair and morning
is a perpetual eve. Water alone —
and that at last on the broad roof of the world
freezes where, from the emptiness of ultimate space,
the hands of eternity stretch. And air also,
caught in that ceaseless immobility,
contracts and sets ice in a man's throat.

For there the winds that walk among the stars
and hold this world in balance, touch the edge
of our mortality; and men who look
above the world's head see a darkness, prevalent,
watching from shores immortal the casual gleam,
that holds all man's hope, pass like a spark on winds;
watching till it shall vanish.
They know not time,
those shores of witness, and their infinite sigh
makes still the strength of ocean. Time is dead,
the god who rules all gods, dead and stricken
by that same pity.
Yet, Demetrius says,
a man returning from that waste voicelessness
walks in our streets like one whose eyes are shadowed
with knowledge that gives darkness more radiance than the light.

IN MINIATURE

MICHAEL IVENS

This blade of grass
Before my eye
Greater is
Than sea or sky.

The mountains and the sun
Are hid
By the shutting
Of a lid.

A whisper in my ear
Is heard
Louder than the screech
Of bird.

The dark that comes
With closed eye
Will last forever
When I die.

NARCISSUS REVISITED

EMANUEL LITVINOFF

If only a tremor touched the glass
your face would be impermanent as water,
as a pattern of leaves
when the grey gull of evening
glides over the river
leaving the shadow on your face.

And you would hold the world's guilt
more tenderly,
loving that brief reflection:
a young god without immortality
doomed so soon to drown.

But the unyielding glass
retains your face in its pitiless eye,
grey feathers of evening falling

as the fire-bird sinks into the ashen sea
to rise to-morrow on a myriad crosses.

Godless, the night
possesses your midnight room,
and dark brushes your face,
a rough beast
in a man-empty universe.

You will come again here many times
drawn by the face the glass contains,
or by the question that cannot be spoken
though the terrible answer remains;
and should the glass crack
under the burden of your silence
you will be face to face with nothing,
and hold the world's guilt
eternally.

IN THE COUNTRY

JOHN BAYLISS

All day the wind, turning the weather-vane
On the high barn, has changed from grey to gold
The silent cock, that sun-caught harbinger
With his fixed dance who first meets heat or cold.

And where a rat scuttles and the straw blows by,
Some men are threshing corn through an old machine
Which rattles both grain and chaff impartially
Over the wooden dice-box of its skin.

Now in the dying light a woman stands
Shading her eyes beside the farmhouse door.
The dust falls softly down upon her hands.
Out in the barn a hen disturbs the straw.

But the gilded cock astride the weather-vane
Silently points toward the setting sun.
The woman goes in. The men stop their machine.
And darkness now rules each direction.

TWO POEMS

DANNIE ABSE

LOST

All the signals of despair,
all the eyes looked up to stare:
the landscape on each side crumbling into nothing,
hailstones slashing across the windscreen.
Now and then the road would disappear
into darkness — but we merely changed gear
to descend the braille snaky hill.
We had no map and there were no signposts.
The driver and the three passengers in the back
began to whistle, though we feared an attack
in this wrong country where the striped rain fell
sullenly forever. Perhaps over the next hill
waited the frontier. Hours more we travelled on
but saw neither garage, nor car, nor inn.
Desperately the driver called for discipline
as Night slowly surrounded us. The dragging clock
on the dashboard stated we were late.
Midnight found us pulled from nowhere
to nowhere by two luminous antennae
blindly fumbling here a hedge, here a gate,
until we ran out of petrol in a country lane
and sat listening to the secretive sound of rain
and the meaningless whirr of the windscreen wiper.
No food or faith stored. Nothing at all foreseen;
and when the headlights curiously went out —
in the back of the car, in the mephitic dark,
the three passengers began to scream.

FOUND

But supposing one morning we awoke dazzled
by splintering sunlight in that country lane
and became startlingly as we imagined ourselves.
The landscape suddenly rearing up before our eyes
real and green like the garden at home years ago
and all the colours in surprise flow back, flow back.
All things to themselves returning: birdsong
transformed into that soaring bird; song of the country girl
(looking over the hedge as if by accident)

becoming purely girl. Everything, everything,
returning as dew goes gloriously many a morning
invisibly, silently: the shadow of perfume
going back into the flower; sunlight on the pond returning
leaving the water dark. As if that very morning
the film reel of love flashed backwards
round the spool of the heart
and breath like faith entered again the body
— the dead hare even to rise and jig around the car, crazily —
then the three passengers would walk out
into the boozy air of summer and stretch themselves
while the driver excitedly pointed
to the white farmhouse magically near.
Supposing later that morning we stood in the ancestral Hall
gazing at the guilty dreadful portraits
and found all the canvases blank and bare:
the paint having gone back into the brush;
not corpses but mere mice under the creaking floorboards —
then standing before the firegrate in that same
ancestral house, the coal might sprout
branches, innocent green leaves, and the devilish
yellow flames go out. It could be like that,
though we were never worse than now we are,
and it is no use wishing a weather that never was;
only it would be better if we could go
to where a man might believe in being a man
unashamedly. Already the three passengers
are jumping back into the car. Look it can happen;
the motorist believing the engine will start
begins driving swiftly down the country lane
past the crossroads, past the signposts,
past the familiar landscapes, and we are singing.

BEAUTY AND AGE

CONSTANCE GREYSTAN

The lovely smile of youth, the petal skin,
Radiancy without, ardour within
Become a more beauteous, soaring flame,
Constant as time, steadfast as a name;
As inward-kindled, glowing seraphim:
Gleaming is Age, Life's interim.

(The "interim" is the period between radiant youth and the perennial youth of Heaven!

TO VENUS

From Lorenzo de' Medici

KENNETH HARE

Leave your dear Cyprus, and all the delights refusing
  Which even that delicate beautiful realm can offer,
  Visit this water: aerial over it hover,
For the slim green rush, and miniature grasses use in
This spring to bathe; light breezes the mists diffusing
  Wake tremulous song, for each little tree can proffer
  Its bevy of birds: and every singer a lover!
Cyprian, be this the fatherland of your choosing;
And if you deign to visit this crystal river,
  Bring with you hither your son, belovéd and peerless,
  That all may judge of his feats and view them clearly;
Wrest from Diana her nymphs o' th' bow and quiver
  Who unscathed though half-clad, range far and fearless,
  Rating your son and his valour as trifles merely!

REUNION

TERESA HOOLEY

For the Faith within them they were driven forth, my fathers,
From glen and mountain, river, meadow and wood;
By the bitter laws driven out across sundering waters,
And long the remembering anguish cried in the blood.

Two hundred years, and a wound was the remembering,
So the language died on the lips and dimmed was the Faith.
In the smoke of reeking cities the turf-tang faded,
With poetry a whisper, the birthland a beckoning wraith.

Away from the breasts of her hills, the dream-locked shining
Of her lakes, her eyes, my fathers wandered afar.
Two centuries' fretting and earning, living and dying,
Till a longing was born with me like the prick of a star.

Cried the ancient voice of Ireland: "Come you, my daughter;
Come back, as the wild geese come, on the scud of the rain."
Down the echoing haunted years the green cords drew me,
Drew the heart and the feet of the exile home again.

THE STUNT

(A manuscript found in a bottle)

At Bonchurch, in the Isle of Wight, a bottle containing the stained and yellow manuscript of a poem was recently washed up on the beach, immediately under the "forsaken garden" of Swinburne's old home.

The poem appears to be based on a legend of Trebizond, which says that, when a certain pre-historic animal called "The Stunt" entered the city, the Muses all veiled their faces and fled through the back gate. Expert examination discloses two voices in the poem — that of the narrator, and that of Swinburne himself. In the latter there seems to be an anticipation of a descent into Malebolge which one hopes has not been accomplished. The experts point out that when the Voice of Swinburne himself is heard through the trumpet, the stanzas end with the shorter line so characteristic of him in this metre. This metrical consideration, in the view of the experts, like their similar tests for the work of Fletcher and Shakespeare, confirms the authenticity of the Voice from below.

The manuscript had undoubtedly been in the bottle for a very long time since the poet gave it to his old friend, the Sea. But the poem is complete:

When nightingales croaked in the sedges
  And frogs like Philomel sang,
And over the hawthorn hedges
  Black apes in the moon-dawn sprang,
While the old cow warbled a ditty
  And the church-clock registered doubt,
A Stunt walked into the city
  And Art went jibbering out.

Now the Stunt had owls in his attic
  And a halo of sanctified red.
He was pathic and paranoiatic
  With only one side to his head;
And, words being bound by convention,
  He thought it far better to grunt;
So the wise called the young to attention
  And told them to worship the Stunt.

He spat and they said he was witty.
  He was sick and they said he had brains;
For it's clear, when you've done with the pretty,
  That only the ugly remains.

But, just as they thought he'd relieved 'em
  Of choosing the better or best,
Like a wicked old Stunt he deceived 'em
  By dying of truth on the chest.

Yet he left them a crapulous saga
  On a leper who crawled through the drains
In quest of a girl who was gaga
  And killed him and ate the remains;
For Belial had groaned "adolescent",
  And Beelzebub tittered "My dear,
Though I find it uncommonly pleasant,
  We can't be Victorian here."

Then a bevy of Bloomsbury ladies
  Went down in the dark to Endor
And implored him to whisper from Hades
  A word of his doings once more;
And the hair on each weak little crumpet
  Stood up, as a voice from the dead
Came whinneying up through a trumpet;
  And these were the words that it said:

I, I am that Algernon Swinburne
  Who once as a master of song.
In the pit where the children of Sin burn
  They are prodding your Stunt with a prong.
Though he yelps for his Pan and Apollo,
  We find in him nothing but wind
And he seems too incredibly hollow
  To live and be skinned.

We regard with utmost abhorrence
  This creature you sent us as "new."
His loves are the loonies of Lawrence.
  His morals are, briefly, the Zoo.
He is not a success here in Hades
  Where sins are more subtle and black;
So I think that your Bloomsbury ladies
  Will soon have him back.

FROM THE MAYOR OF SWANSEA

Acknowledging The Poetry Society's offering to the Dylan Thomas Memorial Fund, His Worship writes: "This cheque is indeed a splendid contribution from your members, and I shall be glad if you will be so good as to convey my sincere thanks to them for their generosity."

A LOSS TO POLAND — AND THE WORLD

Julian Tuwim — 1894–1953

By JACK LINDSAY

When Julian Tuwim died in December 1953 of a heart-attack amid the snows of his beloved homeland, Poland and the world lost a great poet. He belonged to the movement of Young Poland that rose after 1919 had seen the re-birth of Poland as a nation; and he was a leading figure in the group round the magazine *Skamander*, which became the outstanding expression of the new spirit.

The Skamandrites sought to get rid of trivial particularism while remaining essentially Polish, and to regain freshness and variety of form without departing from traditional bases; dealing with city-life as well as the countryside. Tuwim soon showed himself the most richly equipped in technique and the most assured in the range of his themes. The reputation he had gained in 1919 he steadily strengthened till the year of his death. He had a remarkable virtuosity in word-play, yet never lost himself in empty technicalities or private associations. In his early poem "Experiment" he set the key of his whole development. Here he called on poets to "prick to the quick of the common word."

> Break right inside!
> And even Spring will turn into Spring.

The poet's business is not, in short, to declare the great themes of love and nature stale and outworn, but to re-discover their meaning with a freshness, depth and immediacy of impact that will revive them whole in his own mind and in the mind of his reader.

I met Tuwim several times in 1948 and 1952 in Poland, and found him unassuming, kindly, vivid. His passion for words was revealed in the books on the wall of his work-room — all sorts of dictionaries, even of the Bantu and Melanesian languages. His great library of early Polish books had been burned by the Germans; but he was continuing his studies undeterred. He spoke and read English very well, and especially loved Shakespeare, Dickens, and our great Romantics.

His work ranged from charming poems for children to furious satire, from direct lyrics to sustained narrative. Here I can only briefly exemplify this considerable scope and variety. First, one of his delicate lyrics in which despite the lightness of touch we can recognize the hand of a master: "Fireflies":

> Midsummer-night of stars, darkgreen,
> slavonic night of scents unseen
>
> gently bear me where you please,
> sad silent dryad Memories.

Moon-glimmers tremble in the ferns
and phosphorescent purple burns.

Long golden rods I bait to snare
lily-of-the-valley night despair.

Gently. My rod aside I cast
and grasp a tiny flametip fast

till tangled in night's starry net . . .
What course is this? O moonward set.

And here is a brief poem written in the dark years before the war, when he suffered many insults, humiliations and menaces — "Daily Life":

Phrases grow more fantastic now, and things grow more mysterious
Speech is harder still, yet silence worse to keep.
Whispers clot in the crannies of my apartment, imperious,
and a chair that starts by a table ends as a tune in sleep.

Each day the everyday word assumes a deeper meaning:
from under time's moss the secret first-sense stirs again.
I put my ears to the furniture, I hear strange soughs and moaning.
The oaks for their fatherland lugubriously complain.

I must omit examples of his powerful satires or from his long "Polish Flowers" composed during the war-years (when he had escaped to Brazil): a great poem in which the most diverse materials are harmoniously combined. But here is one of his children's poems which have been charmingly set and are now favourites in Poland: "The Belated Nightingale":

Mrs. Nightingale in her acacia-nest is weeping.
Nine was supper time and still from home her husband's keeping.

Always strict in his time-table, where's he now benighted?
Look, it's past eleven and the wretch is nowhere sighted.

Soup of flies in evening-dew: each dish is slowly chilling:
six mosquitoes with the finest mayflower-sauce for filling.

Butterflies well seasoned with deep forest-shade and basted,
gateau made of moon-steeped zephyr for dessert — all wasted.

What if he has been attacked as thoughtlessly he trifled?
O, his feathercoat of grey, his silver voice are rifled.

Yes, an envious skylark's caught him, larking from the azure.
Feathers, they will sprout again, but not his voice, that treasure.

Suddenly there's Mister Nightingale come whistling, hopping.
"Where then were you? winging, flitting? while my tears were
dropping?"

Sweetly cries he for forgiveness, "While you sadly pondered,
such a lovely eve it was that home on foot I wandered."

And, to end, some stanzas from one of his latest poems, "To my Daughter at Zakopane," in which he contrasts the life he has lived with that which was opening before her:

. . . But once your father, know, among these snowdeep banks
roamed like a darkening shadow, with no sheltering place.
The Iron Mob enclosed him round with serried ranks
and called him alien, yelling insults in his face.

High is Giewont. The torrent raves beneath its shadow,
the centuries of our wild history there we scan.
On mountains, daughter, think of plain and meadow;
among the rocks, among the rocks, still think of Man.

Bow, my small daughter, to the mountains and their crown
of Tatra dawns, to snows that seethe with light and blaze,
to dazzling azure and to dazzled clouds, bow down,
bow, daughter, to the lofty Zakopane days . . .

I too when young was there. I drank the wine and mead,
hearkened to ghost-tales and to sounding brass as well.
And almost fell in the abyss-tomb, swayed, unheeding,
for fading laurel-twigs had strewn it with their spell . . .

Bow down then with the freshness of the cheerful dawn
to ardent youth that sunward takes its eagle-flight.
Bow down to truth and labour, and at length return
to luminous Warsaw, you yourself a thing of light.

CAN WE HELP YOU?

The answer is Yes to any Member who is anxious for the best advice about his or her work. The Poetry Society established a CRITICAL SERVICE some years ago, and writers are invited to make use of it.

Two poems may be submitted for criticism and help, for a minimum fee of 5s. The Charge for the criticism of each additional poem (under 100 lines) is 2s. It is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed and that a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed.

I HAVE SEEN

WREY GARDINER

I have seen and I have seen, falling like the dark
Throes of Jove, the great god on the mountain
Who lusted after love, but could not contain
The thunder of power after the dream had gone.

In the loneliness of mountains dreams come and disappear,
Mist, ghost-like on the landscape of truth.
No love exists among the cold stones, the boulders
That lie like animals across the vivid path.

The night road across a continent is full of fear,
Full of the sand wind, full of charm
Where a stone or a bit of wood is a triumph
Of existence in a pale world always revived by dawn.

NIGHT JOURNEY

MICHAEL THOMAS

Slowly this last train drags towards the west.
Sadly the touch of farewell kisses fades.
Across still fields towards the lingering light
we move from a life of day into a death of night.

We sit and taste the dryness of our mouths —
dead dusty passengers without anticipation who
disintegrate if ever touched by thought.
Lights that are life streak suddenly
across the blankness of the windows, but
they pass, unsought, without significance . . .

We would sleep, but our shoes are tight
across our insteps and our heads can find no comfort.
We would read, but the words are nothing
when they reach our minds, and our eyes
are sore with weariness and smoke.

The noise is part of our existence, pounding
our brains to putty-softness, pain —
but half sleep finally, and dreams:
Dreams that have more reality than this;
Dreams with grey back-cloths and with dark ringed eyes;
until the moving sighs, and jolting we awake.
We blear at the darkness; shrug at the now cold air;
pick up our suitcases and walk — still unremembering
all that we know of reason — or this half completed journey.

JOHN MILTON

IAIN CRICHTON SMITH

Seasonless man in the hollow cave of blindness
not resting, but creating your own worlds,
lion of an arctic country. In the envelope
of your dedication wrapped and brooding
planets of clear light, without the intermission
of human eye creating colour. Such light was joy
in the continuous dazzle of angel's wings . . .

Great blind master, in an uneasy time
shut with your long shadows, I see you rising
where the black eagles cross in lightning,
drawing mouthfuls of cold air; or making
your lonely way through ripe fields of thought
at haytime of your genius. From suffering,
never abused, comes water, as from the rock
rise transparent springs, or from granite
diamonds of naked light. Where you trod
no flower burns in a borrowed light
but stands in its own worth having endured
wet hopeless winters.

Great blind man,
you put to shame us sighted through all seasons
but blind in our own pride, darker than
your physical blindness, labouring over worlds.
Wherever your head lies, now in planetary peace,
send rays to brighten our deeper blindness
that we may be conscious of that light
which burns all falsity from our poor thought;
teach us never to bare our hearts too soon
to every wind that crosses at warm June.

ELEGY

MARGARET HALEY CARPENTER

Let the wind blow softly here;
  Let the twilight fall
Gently, gently, on this place
  Where the grass grows tall.

Here the moon will pour cool light
  In a silver flood,
Chilling with its crystal stream
  The once impatient blood.

Stars of snow will drift unseen
  When the nights are long,
And April rain sing heedlessly
  To ears now deaf to song.

In the silence, in the hush,
  Let the shadows fall.
Time, once reckoned by their length,
  Now matters not at all.

REVELATION

RUTH E. THURLEY

I

There is a beauty waiting out of sight
  Beneath the curving of the visible world
Held prisoner, as petals inward curled
  Cup close the flower's hid treasure from the light;
Even as colour lies in depths of white,
  As music waits, within the conch shell whorled,
As life within the seed's brown grave-clothes furled
  So beauty lies, a core of all delight.
But we who scratch rude symbols on the earth —
  As children draw the substance of their dreams,
Laboriously tracing monstrous things —
  How shall we dare bring beauty forth to birth,
How lap in swaddling clothing all that gleams,
  Fountains and leaps — this source of all day-springs?

II

Maker minute, you fashion dust and sand,
And let us see the stars as points of light
Kindly as candles, and the moon's far height
Drawn down by blossoming fruit trees near at hand;
You paint the past, that we may understand,
In small clear pictures, holding to our sight
Long vanished scenes, round curving, mirror bright,
Held like jewelled clusters on a circlet band.
Truth's self is decked with trinkets — time can make
Gay rhymes for children out of battle cries
Or festivals from martyrs' bitter throes,
And we, who would be pilgrims for Love's sake
Still trade for tokens, and small baubles prize,
Afar off following where thy white Christ goes.

AUTUMN CAME TO PARIS

(From the Hungarian of Andrew Ady, 1877–1919)

GODFREY TURTON

Yesterday autumn into Paris crept,
Gliding along the boulevard soundlessly
In August through the hushed leaves of the trees,
And there met me.

Towards the Seine I strolled, kindling to fire
Some little sparks of song under my breath,
Wraithlike, fantastical, encrimsoned, sad;
Their subject death.

As autumn came and whispered in my ear,
Through the hum of the Boulevard Saint-Michel
A shiver ran, and fluttering to the street
Leaves mocking fell.

Just for a moment summer seemed to start;
Then with a laugh from Paris autumn fled.
It came, and that it came I only know
Who heard the rustle overhead.

ACCIDIE

PETER DUNN

The waterfall is empty now:
Along the arid reaches
Of gullied rock, over the gravel beaches
At last exposed, only the warm air whispers
A memory of thunder.
Under that jagged wall
Where the dark salmon lunging
Once thrust against the plunging
Whiteness, up, over the lip of the fall
And onward, like some legendary mortal
Set an impossible task by gods both jealous and stern,
Withers a trembling fern.

A man's dry mood may seize upon such pictures
To drain them of all meaning but his own:
He will not be the first
For whom an image of drought has briefly quenched
Intolerable thirst.

THE CATHEDRAL OF MILANO

MARIE TELLO PHILLIPS

Fair queen of temples, gowned in marble lace,
  Etching your eerie denizens on high,
  Ethereal phantoms reaching for the sky
With upraised hands and eyes praying for grace!
When mellow moonlight floods this holy place,
  Four thousand white veiled saints go floating by;
  From roof to turret top they gently fly
To see the smile upon our Lady's face.

Il Duomo, guardian of Milano's art,
  Your rarest gem and jewel scintillate
To shrine San Carlo in your silver heart!
Six hundred years of genius were given —
  The gift of sculptor, painter, potentate —
To bring to earth this replica of Heaven.

Our Lady from her airy dome looks down
  Upon Milano, and her children smile
  In adoration. Gothic art and style
With centuries of marble tracings, gown
The ghosts of myriad martyrs of renown.
  From pinnacle to pinnacle they file,
  Bearing their jewelled treasures to beguile
The Queen of Heaven, with a lovelier crown.

Your temple rivals Rome's in magnitude,
  Your lordly sepulchres proudly entomb
Archbishop, priest and Prince of church and state —
  The good San Carlo in his silver room —
Enshrined within your sanctuary, they wait
The trumpet call for high beatitude.

THE SWANS RETURNED

HARRIET PLIMPTON

After the swans had gone
Loneliness ringed the lake
As though after great music,
As though the curtains had closed
After great music sung
For the last time by a singer
Gone now forever to join
The loveliness we'll never
See again. But this morning
When I went once more to walk
Where memory alone brought life,
I found the swans returned,
Sailing like slow white clouds;
And hope came back too, that all
Would yet be well within my days,
Now they had come as if sent
At my longing by that Power
Whose garden paths are stars.
They said as clearly as words spoken,
"Beauty will return forever
And on her wings you shall be free."

IN ARDEN

MARGARET SHEPPARD FIDLER

A modern Arden . . . Can there be?
I watch the shadows on the lime,
Leaves dancing there, and every tree
A fairyland of summertime:

Full-scented in the glowing sun
And loud with labour of the bees,
Moon-drenched when the day is done,
They hold a thousand mysteries.

Upon the beech, upon the ash,
About the oak tree's mighty girth,
Is wound a moonlight ray, a sash,
A skein from Elfin-land to Earth,

And there, within the shade perceive,
A lover and his lass go by,
Their new-born love as old as Eve,
His vows — "for all eternity."

There is no change, Arden remains,
Unconscious both of now and then,
And lovers always break the chains
That make Time's fool of other men.

Though plot and hate are in the wind,
A lover sighing in the wood,
Pricks out the letters *Rosalind*
And they are read, and understood.

So she, in shirt and shorts, a tease,
Says "Men are April when they woo" . . .
Fair Rosalind, among the trees,
Capricious yet, as old as new.

Fair Rosalind . . . her brief disguise,
Her make-believe, her quip and jest,
Are born of wit that never dies,
And Will, of all men, knew this best.

A modern Arden . . . Yes, the same,
As like as when the world began,
An Eve, an Adam, and the game
Of Love and Life, for maid and man.

QUIET BEAUTY

WILFRID THORLEY

Smooth are a dove's grey wings,
  Her voice how sweet!
Softly her wooer sings
  His love to tell;
Silent are swans that steer
  With ebon feet
Over a glassy mere
  Unfathomable.

Beauty of doves may go
  Alp-high unheard;
Beauty of swans may glow
  On pits profound;
Softly the wing may sweep,
  The foot be stirred
So that the sky, the deep
  Give back no sound.

Soft are her falling words,
  How few! How few!
Faint as the flight of birds
  That fade in light.
Swans a-drift on a mere,
  Or doves that woo
Token a thought less dear,
  A soul less white.

Soft are her two grey eyes,
  Her voice how soft!
Lovely she seems and wise
  Whate'er she dons.
  Quiet she moves as wings
  That beat aloft,
Smooth as a wave that brings
  The wandering swans.

FALSE GODS

ROBERT McKINNON

The deities who long held sway
O'er Grecian minds have gone the way
Of Egypt's Ra who from the sun
Came forth and vast allegiance won.

And Baal, the leader of his kind —
Perverter of the Syrian mind —
Has gone with proud Philistia's lord,
Great Dagon of the vengeful sword.

Gone too, the fair Astarte, she
From queenly inhibitions free;
And Bacchus, giver of the vine —
Encompasser of Rome's decline.

Their garish kingdoms, based and planned
On spurious concepts, failed to stand;
And crazy empires of our day
Shall totter likewise and decay.

THE ETERNAL ADAM

ROSA WAUGH HOBHOUSE

The motive of man's form lies in its power
To stand and sway, or run against the wind;
But if upon some sunlit strand you find
The naked limbs reposing, at that hour
They will be clothed in beauty like a flower
Or a fair shell the sea has left behind,
Only more lovely still, therewith combined
The latent energy, their primal dower.

So with the spirit of a man: the aim
Lies in the setting of her sails aright,
With or against the wind to move; though night
Blot out heaven's chart of stars, her course the same;
But when, in seas becalmed, at ease she rides
Sheer loveliness is borne upon their tides.

THE LAUREL CROWN

By ELIZABETH DOUGLAS

In the Capitol of Rome, six hundred years ago, the first Poet Laureate was publicly honoured. Francesco Petrarch's crowning, on Easter Sunday, 1341, is described by the English historian Gibbon — "after delivering an oration on poetry and the significance of the laurel he was crowned amid the acclamations of thousands" — and the Clerk of Oxenford in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* has told us that he learnt the story of Griselda from "the first Poet Laureate, Petrarch." Two centuries later the last of the Italian poets whose influence made itself felt throughout Europe, Torquato Tasso, would have been crowned had he not died after being summoned to Rome for the ceremony in 1595.

It was about this time — in 1591 to be exact — that the first English Poet-Laureate was named. He was Edmund Spenser, although Ben Jonson was the first who received the title by formal letters-patent. Earlier on, as far back as the fourteenth century, a versifier or "versificator" was attached to the English Court. As a matter of fact, a "king's minstrel" is said to have founded the monastery of St. Bartholomew in Smithfield, and one William the Foreigner was taken to Palestine to sing King Richard's exploits. Another, Robert Boston, accompanied Edward II to Bannockburn for the same purpose, but the Scots not only won and captured him, they made him celebrate their prowess instead!

Chaucer used the title "laureate poete" for Petrarch and it was applied to himself in turn when the king supplied him with a daily pitcher of wine. He and Gower, Lydgate and Skelton, were predecessors of Spenser, but unofficially. The author of *The Faerie Queene* was granted a pension of £50 by Queen Elizabeth, but the official duty of writing "his quit-rent ode, his peppercorn of praise" first fell to Jonson. His salary was one hundred marks, and "one tierce of Conary Spanish wine yearly." Charles I raised Jonson's salary to the same number of pounds sterling, but James II stingily discontinued the allowance of wine. Firstly the whole of a Poet-Laureate's "salary" was commuted for £27 a year in the laureateship of Henry James Pye, a descendant of whom, be it noted, is now a member of The Poetry Society.

But there were nine Poet Laureates after Ben Jonson and before Henry James Pye. Ben's term of office, which lasted from 1619 to 1637, was followed by an "interregnum until 1660. Then came Sir William Davenant, who had been taken prisoner by the Roundheads and tried for his life, saved only by John Milton's intervention. Davenant wrote many poems and plays in the grand manner, as befitted a laureate, and he was buried in Westminster Abbey. Soon after his death in 1668 John Dryden took office, only to find the royal salary for the double-

post of Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal several years in arrears.

Literary quarrels and political and religious upheavals characterized Dryden's first years in the laureateship, and as he turned Roman Catholic on the accession of James II he lost all his places and pensions in 1689. The advantage of this may have been that it gave him greater leisure for his play-writing and translation, but he had done his best work between 1670 and the year of his dismissal. He outlived his successor, Thomas Shadwell, who died after two years in office from, it is said, an overdose of opium.

Nahum Tate — son of one Faithful Tate — came next. He was an Irishman from Trinity College, Dublin, a "free, good-natured, *fuddling* companion" — which probably explains why he died in poverty in 1715, after twenty-three years' reign. He wrote "While Shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night", and compiled a metrical version of the Psalms, used widely in the Church of England. Tate is the only Poet Laureate on record whose life ended in a sanctuary for debtors, the Mint at Southwark. Nicholas Rowe, his successor (1715–1718), was Shakespeare's first editor.

When Rowe died a grotesque appointment was made by mistake. The Lord Chamberlain offered the crown to Lawrence Eusden, of Trinity College, Cambridge. Eusden seized his chance, took Holy Orders, and became the "parson much bemused in beer" of Alexander Pope's satire. In the end beer proved fatal. His successor in 1730 was Colley Cibber, an author of much greater distinction. Cibber was tormented by the envy of rival aspirants, including Pope himself, also Dennis, Theobald, and Duck (sad how we forget even the names of some poetic personages!).

Colley Cibber died in 1757. The title was offered next to Gray, of the immortal *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, but another man got it whose name and whatever fame was his have been forgotten — William Whitehead. Gray's friend, Mason, who wanted the post for himself, wrote of Whitehead in his annoyance: "Let it be boasted rather than whispered that he was the son of a baker."

Next, in 1785 came Thomas Wharton, worthy clerk, worthy scholar, and little else. In fact, the Poet Laureateship was falling into disrepute. When the death of Dr. Pye, who wrote of birds and flowers till he died in 1813, caused another vacancy, Sir Walter Scott might have had a place on the list and restored its prestige, but he declined because, he said, it would stick to his reputation like a court-plaster. Robert Southey was appointed instead, and found it a "godsend", insuring his life for £3,000. His "Vision of Judgement", describing George III's "ascent to Heaven" was assailed by Byron, who described Southey as "dragged to the heavenly gate by Asmodeus, reading his spavin'd dactyls to the inhabitants who fled dismayed". George quietly "slipped into heaven" in the confusion, crying "What! What! Pye come again? No more — no more of that!"

Southey died in 1843, after thirty years in the Laureateship. Wordsworth then accepted the post without attachments, refusing to buy a court dress. The consequence was that Samuel Rogers' garments and Sir Humphrey Day's sword were worn by him to a State ball, as they were by Tennyson at a function later on. The ode to the Prince Consort, though signed, was probably written by his son-in-law. So the rumour still goes.

Prince Albert's admiration of *In Memoriam* led to the appointment of Alfred Lord Tennyson in 1850. The Queen expressed the wish that the office might be maintained for its antiquity, and because "it afforded a connection through the Household between Her Majesty and the poets of the country." After Tennyson's death in 1892, however, an unsuccessful demand arose to abolish the office. It was thought that Swinburne should have had the honour, but Swinburne suggested Lord de Tabley! Then, after much speculation and "lobbying", and many letters in *The Times*, Alfred Austin was appointed in 1896. He gave up the bar to write verse. Educated at Oxford, he proved a staunch upholder of the worst tradition, so far as the laureateship was concerned, specimen lines of his official verse being as follows:

> O thou nation, base, begotted, whose
> ambition can be shotted,
> And huge mounds of corpses clotted with cold
> gore alone can sate . . .

At Austin's death in 1913, came Robert Bridges. Again we had an Oxford man, but how vastly different! The authenticity of his nature poems, his plays and literary criticisms is remembered, especially his important, long, philosophical work, "The Testament of Beauty" written at the age of eighty-five, a year before his death in 1930.

And so to John Masefield, who is still with us. Mr. Masefield came to poetry after he had worked as a sailor, tramp, bar-tender in America, and journalist on the staff of *The Manchester Guardian*. His experiences never hindered his quest for beauty: he actually claimed as his kingdom "the dirt and the dross, the dust and scum of the earth." During the years before the first World War his vogue was tremendous, and sufficiently lasting to win him the laureateship after his best work was done. It is fitting that we conclude the story of the Laurel Crown with John Masefield to lend whatever justification we need for re-telling it: encyclopaedias are very well in their way, which is the way of thoughts and acts "reduced to lists of dates and facts" — not, as the very title, a royal office, suggests at its best, "the music, the colour, the glory, the gold."

THE POEM THAT INFLUENCED ME

A SYMPOSIUM

Concluding our Symposium we have the pleasure of including a late-comer among the contributions — Sir Herbert Read's, to be added to the nine other contemporary poets of distinction who have taken part in the Symposium — A. E. Coppard, Richard Church, John Redwood Anderson, V. Sackville-West, Herbert Palmer, L. A. G. Strong, Phoebe Hesketh, Kenneth Hare, and F. L. Lucas.

SIR HERBERT READ

I think that, like others who have contributed to this Symposium, I should find it difficult to name any single poem that had a predominant influence on me. Particular poems, or rather particular *poets*, influenced me in succession, and it would not only be difficult, but even misleading to select from these influences any one particular poem or any one particular poet. I would say, however, that the first reading of Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* was an experience somewhat deeper than the rest. A little later came a more technical influence — the influence of the Imagists — F. S. Flint, Richard Aldington, H.D., Ezra Pound. The spiritual influence of Blake, the technical influence of Ezra Pound — that would about cover it.

"DEAR EDITORS—"

(The opinions expressed in the following Letters from Readers are not necessarily those of *The Poetry Review*).

CICELY FOX-SMITH

According to Milton poetry should be "simple, sensuous, passionate." His own, in spite of his elaborate vocabulary and recondite allusions, remains true to this dictum, but that now most in vogue is none of these things, and its failure is to many of us proclaimed by the number of books issued by the critical pundits, academic or other, who provide us with interpretations of what the poets mean. Their main purpose seems to be destructive; they share in the present fashion for de-bunking, leaving our former idols stripped bare. In point of fact they are remoter from the heat and burden of the day than many of the humbler singers who are content, like Masefield in his earlier work, to sing "Of the maimed, of the halt and the blind in the rain and the cold."

Of these was Cicely Fox-Smith, a note of whose passing appeared in a recent

issue of *Punch*, to which she had given much of her lighter output. Knowing nothing of the facts of her life, to me it remains a mystery as to how she came to know so much of the hard life of sailing before the mast. And her view of this is anything but feminine; she can feel and convey its grimness. She accepts the sailor's acceptance of this without any waste of self-pity.

No more time to spend on grieving
(Sacramento, Sacramento!)
All because o' the man we're leaving :
The salt tides drive his drowned bones
In and out o' the Farallones
(And away O! Sacramento!)

That piece, at least, should be in every anthology worth its price.

WILFRID THORLEY

"THE BALLAD OF SIR JOHN PHILPOT"

Though Herbert Palmer says some handsome things about my translation of *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*, he takes exception to *The Ballad of Sir John Philpot*, on the grounds that I am "in line with neither modernists nor Georgians", and "away also from the differing idioms of Masefield, Yeats, and others." I hope so indeed! To write another's style is to go abroad in a mask. Does Mr. Palmer have it against Augustus John that he is away from the "differing idioms" of Dali and Picasso?

KENNETH HARE

HERBERT PALMER writes in reply:

If Red Riding Hood will persist in pushing her elbow into the mouth of the bad wolf she must abide by the consequences. In my review I took no definite exception to anything. The book was sent to me for citicism and review, so I stated certain facts and appearances about it. This very long ballad is not written in any of the idioms and phraseologies which have been most acceptable to the poetry readers of the last forty years. It does not seem to belong to the twentieth century. Rather does it ring with the tones of some of the popular Victorians. But it is more archaic. Something of Rossetti's pre-Raphaelitism seems to have got into it. I did not say I had anything against all this, but it seems that Mr. Kenneth Hare *has*, and cannot bear to think about it.

As to Mr. Hare's first letter, and Mr. Waveney Girvan's supporting assertion that I have done wrong "in denying Mr. Hare the classical qualities" why in the name of reason did he label his poem "ballad"? Why does Mr. Hare want his bread buttered both sides? True-blue British ballads are unrestrained records of passion and, for the most part, were first written in the "sprung-rhythm" of the ancient Border minstrels. The Ballad is at war with classicism. What is the difference between D. G. Rossetti of the sonnets and D. G. Rossetti of the ballads, or the difference between the ballad-inspired Coleridge and the Milton-inspired Wordsworth? What is the difference between Bridges and Masefield, or between Landor and Browning? Even my own poems show these sharp dividing differences. Perhaps of my 500–600 printed pages I value most the long narrative poems, which are often ballads or shaped by ballads. But I am known best by the shorter poems, which show frequent classical influences. I do not object to anyone pointing out the differences. Why should Mr. Hare try to hold up his reviewer – who has the right to say what he likes so long as it is not an obvious lie?

Book Reviews . . .

"UNDER MILK WOOD" YES AND NO

Dylan Thomas, For and Against. The debate continues. When this author's volume of *Collected Poems* was published nearly two years ago we of *The Poetry Review* thought it right and proper that the two opposing views of Dylan Thomas's work should be expressed in these pages, and again, with the posthumous publication of *Under Milk Wood*, his "Play for Voices" (Dent, 8s. 6d.), we have invited two critics to give their strongly different opinions about it. On this occasion we have altered our method somewhat. Perhaps unexpectedly, a young critic says No instead of saying Yes! It is interesting to know that Orthodoxy is not confined to the Methusalehs of Art.

I

"NOT GOOD ENOUGH"

Since his death sudden adulation has alighted on Dylan Thomas's work. Most of those who ranted formerly of excessive exuberance and undelightful booming now pile sorrel upon the hearse of Genius. Prejudice has changed sides. Only clear-eyed critics, like Robert Graves, keep their sense of proportion: "Thomas at the age of sixteen sent me the best poems he wrote, for my comment, simple and uncomplicated; they were not, however, good enough, but since he could not do better he resorted to rhetorical tricks to distract the eye which might have evaluated them correctly had they remained simple and uncomplicated."

Most of *Under Milk Wood* is uncomplicated and, as far as the critical reader is concerned, not good enough — if, as we are told in the blurb, "within its dramatic structure it contains Thomas's finest poetic writing since the publication of his *Collected Poems*. "But with the possible exception of Mr. Waldo's song (not broadcast) and a few scattered fragments, there is nothing in it that approaches poetry. Some of the prose is good, but it too often degenerates into that maudlin hybrid, the prose-poem.

I had great admiration once for Thomas's work and listened to his "Play for Voices" with an enthusiasm I no longer possess. I found that my smiles tended to wane on a first reading of what I had greatly enjoyed on a first hearing. There is some genuine humour, as in Mog Edwards' letter to Miss Price: "I dreamed last night you were all dripping wet and you sat on my lap as the Reverend Jenkins went down the street. I can see you got a mermaid in your lap, he said, and he lifted his hat. He is a proper Christian". But the husbands and wives perpetually at variance are not always accommodated with such skill. One of the disadvantages of his subject is that there have to be so many of these. Mr. Ogmore, Mr. Pritchard and Mrs. Ogmore-Pritchard. Mr. and Mrs. Pugh ("sweet as a razor"), Organ Morgan and his wife . . . Although seeming to be

distinct characters at first, they lose their individuality on repeated readings and become little more than variations on a worn theme. If only a play that lasts is good, then *Under Milk Wood* is, I repeat, not good enough.

All great works of literature are *about* something. "Didactic" is, perhaps, too strong a term and can easily be confused with flag-waving, yet great literature informs in an especial manner — as, for example, in Hardy's phrase "you could see the ghost of her child in her face". Well, what is this play about — a Welsh seaside village from midnight to midnight? Nogood Boyo has the real answer: "I don't know who's up there and I don't care."

Perhaps I expected too much and perhaps this piece was only meant as a trifle. Certainly the most charming parts of it, like Lily Smalls mouthing to herself in the looking-glass ("Nobody loves you. That's what you think!). Polly Garter's song and the Children's game (admirably set by Daniel Jones) are unpretentious enough. To estimate *Under Milk Wood* a well-turned trifle, however, is, for the Thomas fans, to damn with faint praise, but there is, I think, only one truly profound line in it that approximates to the poetry promised us: "Oh, isn't life a terrible thing, thank God?"

STEPHEN PIKE

II

A GREAT HUMANIST

We are the little men, the leeches of literature. We attach ourselves to the tail of the great man's jacket and when he turns around we turn with him, so he never sees us. We are literary busybodies, self-appointed judges who presume to tell the world what *we* think of the poetry written by young men in the April of their passion and by old men who distil into language the experiences of a lifetime. We applaud or condemn according to our own whimsical standards of judgement. We hum and haw, cavil and chatter, protest and carp, while other men create. Very often our function is lent a semblance of legitimacy by the indisputably inferior standard of the work we criticize. But when faced with a work of surpassing genius we are impotent, inarticulate, and in danger of making fools of ourselves.

For this reason I am thankful to write in favour of *Under Milk Wood*. While recognizing the futility of these polite exchanges of opinion on literary matters, I welcome the opportunity to indulge my enthusiasm for one of the greatest poets of the twentieth century.

Like most of the people who create it and those who consume it, literature has been hopelessly conditioned by this industrial, scientific, and bureaucratic age. Given full rein the scientist would immolate the singing-bird, Poetry, in his crucible as an offering to the God of Reason. But the poetry of Dylan Thomas would rise up, phoenix-like, from the ashes. His poetry is not of an age, it is eternal. His hymns of praise are dedicated to the timeless beauty of the natural

world. His spirit was as impassioned as Shelley's and as generous as Chaucer's.

It is this generosity which makes *Under Milk Wood* an enduring piece of literature. Call it generosity or love, what you will, the quality which enables him to create a gallery of living characters — rogues, braggarts, drunkards, loungers, scandal-mongers, conservative old maids and promiscuous young ones — characters not wholly commendable, but all of them redeemed by the humour, tolerance and beneficence of their creator.

In an age when most artists either condemn their fellow-men or seek to change them Dylan Thomas was one poet who could accept them as they are; accept them with all their faults and failings, their narrow-mindedness and crudity, accept them and, in spite of everything, love them with the passionate love of the great humanist. More than any other contemporary writer he could see and represent the fundamental greatness, the nobility, the dignity, the divinity of man.

Many people fail to understand and appreciate the poetry of Dylan Thomas because they think he stands alone, apart from any tradition, on ground arrogantly occupied by himself, which is to them alien territory. But surely even these people must recognize in *Under Milk Wood* the perpetuation of a literary tradition which can be traced back through Dickens and Shakespeare to Chaucer in this country and in France to Rabelais and Villon. In *Under Milk Wood*, for the first time in many years, the proletarian spirit, the coarse and healthy humour of the common man, has found its way into literature.

In any discussion of the work of Dylan Thomas the question of language inevitably arises. Inevitably because his use of language is very audacious and apparently original. I say apparently original because it is in fact, though the English reader rarely appreciates this, well within the tradition of Welsh poetry. Some critics have cited the work of Gerard Manley Hopkins as an influence which contributed to the formation of Thomas's style. Hopkins was a student of Welsh poetry and both poets were drawing upon the same sources. In the writings of the fourteenth-century Welsh poet, Dafydd Ap Gwilym, certain characteristics are perceptible, to describe which an uninformed critic might sneeringly invent the epithet *Thomasian*. The first sentence of *Under Milk Wood* furnishes us with two excellent examples:

> It is spring, moonless night in the small town, starless and bible-black, the cobblestreets silent and the hunched, courters'-and-rabbits' wood limping invisible down to the sloeblack, slow, black, crowblack, fishingboat-bobbing sea.

Notice the phrase "the hunched, courters'-and-rabbits' wood" and the whole string of adjectives preceding the word "sea". The invention of imaginative compound epithets like these was a characteristic of Welsh poetry even before the days of Dafydd Ap Gwilym. To-day, after at least six centuries, the device, when used by Dylan Thomas, is still effective and imaginatively stimulating.

But language is only important in so far as it expresses the personality of the artist who uses it. The language of *Under Milk Wood* certainly achieves this. It soars and swoops like the lark, and like the lark it sings and shouts with joy, it splutters and spurts and pulsates with life. Into every word is infused something of the turbulent spirit of the poet. Every line is animated with a sense of the glory of life.

This "play for voices" is one of the sanest literary works created in the present century. Sane because implicit in it is a whole philosophy of values. Emphasis

is placed on the things that really matter. The town falls "head over bells in love"; the outside world is unimportant, for the world it contains within itself is complete. Only individual persons matter, and the essence and motive of life is the individual's response to universal experiences. That is why the poet chose, as the main subject of his work, to show a number of different people responding to the spirit of the awakening year. The sanity of the play is consistent, for there is no bowing to the traditional taboos. They are firmly put in their place, though with gentle, good-natured humour. The overthrowing of the taboo of sex is embodied in the poet's obvious approval of the behaviour of Polly Garter, and enough is said about the taboo of religion when the Reverend Eli Jenkins, having recited his poem of praise to Milk Wood, Llaregyb Hill and the River Dewi, considers his morning service to be completed.

The worlds of the great poet and the great humorist are not fundamentally different. They both give us a sane and balanced standard of values. In the genius of Dylan Thomas both these worlds are combined. Many years ago he proved himself a poet of major stature and now, posthumously, we appreciate him as a man to whom the unsophisticated, earth-born, healthy, bawdy humour of the not-so-common common man was indigenous. Allowed a little more time he might easily have created his own Pantagruel.

STUART HOLROYD

A NOVEL IN VERSE

By STEPHEN GRAHAM

Brother to Dragons, by Robert Penn Warren (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 15s.).

Robert Penn Warren is a writer of fine prose, colourful and rhythmic, best exemplified in the early part of his novel *All the King's Men*. He has a gift for moving description and striking utterance which he has now applied to the writing of a novel in verse. As a poet he could be linked with Edgar Lee Masters, which of course is high praise. Whether his book will make as much stir as *The Spoon River Anthology* is not certain, but *Brother to Dragons* is a great American poem to which reference will constantly be made in histories of literature.

It is difficult to describe this work. It is not an epic, nor a philosophical poem, nor strictly speaking narrative. Believe it or not, it is a crime story, a melodrama that is however historical and authentic, but one in which the characters are raised from the dead and speak to-day and confabulate with the author, Mr. Warren himself.

Robert Penn Warren has a quarrel with the great Jefferson who believed in the perfectability of mankind, but deliberately turned a blind eye on the fact that even his own kindred had committed a frightful murder. The plea of the poem is this, that when you accept the ultimate future of mankind as perfect peace and the rule of the meek upon earth you overlook that cruelty and brutality in the individual which cannot be exorcised by fine words and ever memorable noble speeches. The

argument is important because it brings before a tribunal of readers the question of the validity of the whole American point of view.

The book of a crime in verse has its counterpart in *The Ring and the Book,* in which there are passages of lyric beauty far beyond the muse of Robert Penn Warren. But Browning's poem is encumbered with much that is sheer harangue, whereas there is at least some poetry on every page of *Brother to Dragons.* For that reason the American book is easy to read, and one is not tempted to skip. There are so many good lines and passages that it is almost invidious to quote and compare.

I parked the car in the best shade there was,
Got out and left my father drowsing there.
For he was old, already pushing eighty.
No truth on mountains any more for him,
Nor marvel in the bush that burns and yet is not consumed,
Nor on the exposed height terror in the astonishing tonality of
thunder.
For he had climbed his mountains long ago . . .

or:

one wild goose that came one fall,
Lost from its own that like a constellation
Star triumphing and steady thus bestrode
The imperial cold altitude . . .

or:

The two brothers sat by the sagging fire.
Lilburn and Isham sat by the fire,
For it was lonesome weather.
"Isham" said Lilburn, "shove the jug nigher,
For it is lonesome weather.
It is lonesome weather in Kentucky,
For Mammy's dead and the log burns low
And the wind is raw and it's coming snow
And the woods lean close and Virginia's far.
And night is dark and never a star . . .

Then as examples of striking lines:

I have been a stranger in my bed at night
I have been a stranger at the breaking of bread,
I have been a stranger at the monstrous conversation of ocean,

and:

Men had come West in hope. This is the West.
Therefore what more is there for man to hope for?
The arrogant comet shoulders the old constellations.

The only thing that mars the poetry is the occasional modern flippancy such as "God shook the country like a rug and sloshed the Mississippi", or "I'd pull Jesus Christ off the Cross and make him talk turkey." And a poet should not use such an expression as "Gabriel's tootle". Decency forbids.

ANCIENT AND MODERN

By GEOFFREY JOHNSON

Aristotle on the Art of Fiction, an English Translation by L. J. Potts (Cambridge University Press, 6s.).

Leopardi, by Iris Origo (Hamish Hamilton, 21s.).

The appearance of the first of these two books, though rather highly priced for a paper edition, is timely. Not only does it meet the needs of those many candidates for the English Tripos without classical backgro nd, but in general it should clear the air of long-standing misconceptions about what rules Aristotle did and did not formulate, misconceptions and wilful distortions prevalent among even the poets themselves from Sidney to Arnold. The term "fiction", of course, connotes nothing novelistic, but creative literary imagination in general rather than poetry in the restricted sense hitherto associated with the label "Poetics".

The introductory essay has sustained copiousness and clarity; in this and the helpful explanatory notes the scholarship is lightly worn, and the translation itself is so flexibly done in the modern idiom as almost to induce the illusion that one is reading criticism by a leading contemporary. What no translator could remove, however, is the impression that universal in many senses as the great Greek writers are, they are parochial in the sense that they are completely unaware of any civilization but their own. They have not the whole truth, the universal truth, any more than have certain religions of vast antiquity which claim that they and they alone had it revealed to them once and for all at one particular point in time.

The acceptance of Aristotle wholesale would in a parallel sense be crippling, at least to poets, whose very function is to expand not delimit the horizons of imaginative truth. All the same, it would be well for many poets, instead of floundering in their own conceit and ignorance, to know what the Aristotelian values are before they decide to ignore them or not, and for those many junior know-all reviewers with just enough of learning to misquote to know precisely what Aristotle did set up as standards. In short a most valuable little book.

One of the supreme classical virtues is economy. Consider the spare but profoundly beautiful story, "Cupid and Psyche", if narrated by almost any woman novelist, the voluminousness of to-day's philosophers in contrast with Plato's slim *Republic*, or many a modern poet who proclaims that his complexity is such that poetry cannot be achieved without liberal use of terms from Freud, Marx, Government blue-books, the clinic and the aerodrome, the barrack square and the brothel.

Virgil has a vocabulary of under 2,000 words; Leopardi, of the Virgilian

order in greatness by any standards, ancient or modern, has a vocabulary as austere in its simplicity and produces effects as magical. Apart from his philological dissertations, which do not concern us, his output also is slender; he composed on the whole, as this fine biography clearly shows, with painful difficulty and with long critical intervals in between; his philosophy — the utter vanity and nullity of human existence — is not only commonplace but often maddening in its monotony; all that he has to say is comprised in a score or more of priceless things in his *Canti* and *Operette Morali*. Yet he is a supremely great poet, and that almost wholly because his tortured Romantic sensibilities find ultimate serenity in impeccably classical expression; in the utter wretchedness of the human spirit that finds its peace only in exquisiteness of musical form he has no modern equal, except perhaps Baudelaire.

It is nearly always a disillusionment to meet a favourite author in the flesh, and to see a poet whom one almost worshipped in youth so unsparingly, though lovingly, depicted, is at times positively painful. Yet so fine are the skill and sympathy of his biographer that the book simply cannot be put down; its fearless truth is more absorbing than all but the very greatest fiction. Hunchback, hypochondriac, dirty and offensive in personal habits, rhetorically patriotic in the grand manner yet little better than a poltroon at the smell of Napoleonic gunpowder, at the Naples cholera, or at any threat of the many deaths he so professed to long for, the exquisite spirit broken on the triple wheels of religiously bigoted and provincially aristocratic parenthood, nostalgia in spite of himself for his native spot and visions of the Risorgimento — all these aspects of the man, his human greatness with all their inconsistencies and self-contradictions are wonderfully conveyed.

Not a little of the book's power and charm is due to the author's unrelenting hold on truth, a hold akin to her model's. She largely lets the Letters and Leopardi's merciless self-portraiture in his encyclopaedic day-book, the *Zibaldone*, speak for themselves. Hardly since Mrs. Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, whom, with Emily, he so resembles in spiritual loneliness, physical misery, thwarted genius and early death, has such a candidly revealing biography appeared. Just as the churchyard atmosphere of Haworth Parsonage, so the frozen silence of the Palazzo Leopardi is sent into the reader's very bones.

The Marchesa Origo, who published a first edition of this book in 1935, and has had access to more of the poet's correspondence edited since then, has done a most memorable service to one who is not only a great national, but a great cosmopolitan figure. For all his many calamities, Leopardi could not have been more fortunate in one respect, his biographer:

> Di qua dove son gli anni infausti e brevi
> Questo d'ignoto amante inno ricevi.

ROUND THE GLOBE

By ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Shakespearian Emendations and Discoveries, and *Emendations to Three of Shakespeare's Plays,* by Howard Parsons (Ettrick Press, 10s. 6d.).
Shakespearian stage Production, by Cécile De Banke (Hutchinson, 25s.).

Readers who enjoyed the "Emendations to Shakespeare," a series that ran in *The Poetry Review,* will be delighted to know that they have been published in book form with the addition of some related essays. It has been a lament that the text of Shakespeare's plays is often corrupt because the Quartos were printed in many instances from acting copies, the two devoted actors in Shakespeare's own company, who sponsored the 1623 First Folio, surrendering control before correcting the proofs. When we consider that these trenchant studies by Mr. Howard Parsons are the latest and most conclusive in a long line of literary detection we may almost forgive the crimes and aberrations of contemporary pirates and printers.

Mr. Parsons is surely the M.I.5 of Shakespeariana. In the first-mentioned of his books he has taken six of the plays — *As You Like It, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Tempest, Hamlet, Macbeth,* and *Othello* — and selected from their debateable words and phrases those particular errors in the text which he considers vital to plot and characterisation. The smaller work is really an appendix, and covers *The Merry Wives of Windsor, Love's Labour's Lost,* and *The Comedy of Errors.* The suggested corrections are the product of the author's own vast knowledge. Each fascinating stage of the process of rectification convinces and all scholar-actors and students will be indebted for these illuminations of the intention of genius.

Equally attractive is Cécile De Banke's *Shakespearian Stage Production.* A lecturer at Wellesley College, Massachusetts, the author holds the incontestable view that the plays only yield their full glory when staged under the conditions for which they were originally written. We are given authoritative and illustrated details of the Elizabethan stage at The Globe, also the personal histories of Shakespeare's company for whom the characters were devised, with descriptions of the costumes worn and the music and dances. To read this book is to live again on Bankside, to watch the play developing from inner to middle and outer stage; to observe the polite enthusiasm of the two-penny gallery and the storming cheers of the penny groundlings; to unravel the mysteries of farthingale, stomacher, slashed doublet and gaberdine; to follow the gay or stately measures of pavan, galliard and cinque-pace to hautboy and lute; and to listen, with awe and delight, as majestic Richard Burbage and droll Will Kempe speak the undying poetry in all its inaugural splendour.

STREWN ON THE WIND

By KATHLEEN VALMAI RICHARDSON

Undercliff Poems 1946-53, by Richard Eberhart (Chatto and Windus, 10s. 6d.).

Out of the Dark Poems, by Phoebe Hesketh (William Heinemann, 8s. 6d.).

Collected Poems 1933-53, by Hedley Lucas (John Sherratt, 10s. 6d.).

Singing Down the Years, a Selection of the Poems of Margaret Armour (The Albyn Press, 3s. 6d.).

The Whirligig and Other Poems, by Morris Cox (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 10s. 6d.).

Fully articulate, the American poet Richard Eberhart can both state and emerge from the conflict: often quite simply, as in "Forms of the Human", although, on the whole, his latest collection shows an increasing intricacy of thought. His equipment is formidable. The swift strokes and slashes bring off "Fragment of New York" superbly. The "Legend of Viable Women", full of sap and malice, stings the eye and ear, save where the pencil stabs right through the paper, forcing inversions such as "her Packard of Philadelphia spurred she"! "Grape Vine Shoots" delights as a dry-point — and suddenly springs the pure lyric in the final name-poem. Hopefully we turn back to the poem at the beginning — "Indian Pipe" — and there it springs again. However tortuously intellectual some of the poems are, some

> . . . are pages strewn on the wind.
> They are purities, like this light-stepping, high air.

The essential virtue of Phoebe Hesketh's work has often been described as "simplicity" and if by this is meant a steadfast putting aside of flashiness, I agree. True simplicity implies rejection of the non-essential. In her latest poems, chosen by Richard Church, the germ of poetry lives; the images are clear, the adjectives vivid by pin-point choice rather than by hyphenation. Here is "a strong brook slurring through the weed".

It would not be fair to either author or reviewer to attempt a detailed analysis of the (literally) hundreds of poems in Hedley Lucas's collection. These cover a wide field and it is pleasant to find a busy man of affairs concerning himself with "The Unity of Joys" and "Symbols". Though the style is conventional enough, in verses such as "Of a Truth, the Half, the Whole" a reaching out for the living truth — which must come first in all poetry — is apparent.

Despite the prosodical afflictions of their respective periods — the "poetical" Second Person and the D.T. Portmanteau — both Margaret Armour's posthumously collected work and the first-born *Whirligig* by

Morris Cox show in entirely opposed ways, this same reaching out. In *Singing Down the Years* the inversions, the elisions, the Thee's and Thou's, inexorably date the poems; nevertheless, there is depth and dignity in them. "Love the Enricher" and "Frail Stewardship" are full and firm and have captured something of both truth and beauty. *Whirligig* for all its uncomfortable nuptials of "lew-warm", "alongthrough", "blurr-spooring" and other strange couplings; the choruses in "The Football Match", which rival the College Yell in phonetic lunacy; folkish follies like "Coconuts sat wombing in a row", has something — a kind of earthy vitality such as the village loon displays to attract attention. In addition to the copious notes, a glossary might have been a good idea.

ZEST AND ABANDON

By JOHN GRADDON

Restoration Carnival, by V. De Sola Pinto. (Folio Society, 18s.).

The sub-title of this book — "A Biography-Anthology of the Courtier Poets" — is an apt summary.

Professor Pinto is naturally accurate in the historical setting, and in the literary sense he restores, entertainingly and vividly, a rumbustious period. These elegant, witty, nobly-licensed profligates lived and wrote with a zest and an abandon, now foreign and remote and far too enviable to deplore.

Their pranks, bawdy and otherwise, are not to be judged by our standards, and much may be forgiven those who live to see a return to a rule and a place in the realm that had seemed lost forever; and yet continue, ironically and satirically, to flirt with the displeasure of the paradox that was Charles II.

Their verses, turned and contrived though they are, have the spaciousness of life. Reading them one does not envy, for so much talent often 'run his link full in your face'. Rochester, the greatest poet of them all, wild, witty and notorious, writes sometimes with a clear, lyrical beauty; ofttimes with a startling psychological insight into the human heart; and as a philosopher to his journey's end:

> *Nothing*, thou Elder Brother ev'n to Shade,
> Thou hadst a being e're the World was made
> And (well fixt) art alone, of ending not afraid.

THE QUIET HEART

Out of the Years, by Rosa Waugh Hobhouse (The Ditchling Press, 6s.).

The inward tranquillity that will outstay the years can only come from an abiding faith — a faith against which the tumult of outward events, of personal sorrow and affliction can storm in vain; a faith that accepts; a faith that finds, so naturally, its own beauty reflected everywhere.

Rosa Hobhouse's poems, covering many years, have the strength and serenity that comes from such a faith. They are lovely in content and a joy to re-read:—

Lawns of my soul, on which the feet of sleep
Tread with a touch divine . . .

Yet they do not come from one whose life has been sheltered and guarded. On the contrary, Rosa Hobhouse has spent all her days unsparingly in the service of others. These are her moments of quiet reflection charged with perception and iridescent with her personality.

"At the heart of it all is my love." It is not perhaps strange that one gets a sense, from a life so unlike one's own, of personal inadequacy, of a missed road, of an awareness of what might have been. For here is the texture of a life that is free from doubt, has never faltered and continues the heritage that comes from the soil and the faith of the ages. "We need a quiet heart to love the stars."

The book is excellently produced and has a drawing of the author when young, by Edna Clarke Hall. JOHN GRADDON.

TWO VOICES FROM OVERSEAS

Black Fire, White Fire, by Laurence Pratt (Wings Press, California, $2).
Unto the Hills, by Katherine Carr Henze (Wings Press, $2).

Both these books are to be welcomed. Laurence Pratt, with five previous collections to his credit, is the more experienced; his philosophical symposium, "Soul's Evidence", is good within its limits, but the theme is too vast for the dozen pages at his disposal. He is more incisive in the lyrics, which comprise two thirds of the book and show fine flexibility of form. "Brothers" and "White Ascension" are notable examples, and he is also skilful in the sonnet.

Miss Henze is more gently traditional, and more preoccupied, though by no means always, with pure Nature themes. Her compensating virtue is a richer endowment of verbal music. Several of her lyrics, such as "Meadow Song", are sheer melody. GEOFFREY JOHNSON.

POETRY ALL SORTS

Notes by the Editorial Staff

(The inclusion of a new work in these notes does not preclude a subsequent review).

Poetry books galore: to the making of them there is no end. Indeed, whatever many of our publishers may say and do, there was actually an increase in the number issued last year, and since then a good average has been maintained. Poetry all sorts; so we may describe them in bulk: original work by the known and the unknown, anthologies of the past and the present, reprints of the poetry of classic poets, essays on various aspects of modern and not-so-modern verse — the editorial table is crowded with a variety of new volumes by English authors, and, moreover, with enough that has been translated from other languages to remind us of the old but always new statement that Art is international.

From the reader's point of view, which happens to be our own, the selection and translation by F. L. Lucas of *Greek Tragedy for Everyman* (Dent, 21s.) will be

the most valuable of these writings from overseas. It is a companion volume to the same translator's *Greek Poetry for Everyman*, and of the thirty-three Greek tragedies and eleven comedies that have survived, seven are included here, two each by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and one by Aristophanes. There are also some fragments of other tragic and comic poets. Mr. Lucas, whose own poetry was included in the October-December number of *The Poetry Review*, gives us the assurance that his introduction and notes are meant for the ordinary English reader who cares for poetry and wishes to travel "through a great age long gone."

Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud, and Paul Valéry, all of France, are the subjects of two other books and a pamphlet. Miss Enid Starkie, of Oxford University, is an authority on French literature, and her fascinating Zaharoff Lecture for 1954 on *Rimbaud*, is reprinted in pamphlet form for the centenary celebrations at the Clarendon Press (Geoffrey Cumberlege, 2s. 6d.). Valéry is claimed by Dr. Norman Suckling as an eminent modern representative of the civilized mind, and the University of Durham, at which he is Lecturer in French, has published his *Paul Valéry and the Civilized Mind* (Cumberlege, 25s.). *Baudelaire; a Study of his Poetry*, by Martin Turnell (Hamish Hamilton, 21s.), is a study which abounds in such words and phrases as "volupté," "pays parfumé", "charmes ignorés", "brune *enchanteresse*", which still appear to fascinate those who claim that France is the most civilized nation in the world.

Rainer Maria Rilke's *Correspondence in Verse with Erika Mitterer* is another work of translation (Hogarth Press, 10s. 6d.). In the year 1924 Rilke received a letter from a feminine admirer, a young Austrian. It contained an expression of her admiration in verse, remarkable for a girl of eighteen, and the communications with each other that followed have been rendered into English by N. J. Cruickshank, with an introduction by J. B. Leishman. An essay on Shakespeare's "The Phoenix and the Turtle" in the original German of Heinrich Straumann, *Phonix und Taube*, has come from Artemis-Verlag, Zurich.

Then there are pamphlets on *Creative Freedom and the Soviet Artist* by Marietta Shaginyan (Soviet News, London, 3d.), and *Irish Literature and its Influence*, a lecture by Sidney Arnold, which may be had from the author, South Chingford, Essex. Each has quality, and both have something to say that should be received with sympathy and understanding by English readers. We offer a word of recommendation for *This Modern Age and Other Poems* by C. Raju (Popular Book Depot, Luzac and Co., 40 Russell Street, London). Dr. Amaranatha Jha has contributed a foreword in which he emphasizes some of the best lines in these short pieces. An example is: "Dream-shackled by the moon."

Another welcome volume of verse recently arrived from overseas ought to have preceded Mr. Raju's book, because it is published in the Hague (Boucher, 12s 6d.), and the author is Nicholas G. Lély, Minister of Greece in Holland. A foreword assures us that "this book in English translation of the Greek text would never have been published were it not for the highly inspiring co-operation of the prominent American poet Dr. Joseph Auslander", whose poem to Mr. Lély is published at the end of the book. *Apollo in Times Square* is Mr. Lély's title, and a very brief word picture, "August Afternoon", may be quoted as characteristic:

> The sun plays in your courtyard
> With your trellised grapes
> And your marble staircase
> Adorns with orange drapes.

From Croatia comes *Wild Chestnuts*, by Vlasta Ursic, a remarkable little collection translated by Marjorie Boulton, from whose address at High Lane, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent (1s. 8d.) copies may be obtained. "To English readers,"

says Miss Boulton, "this poetry will probably appeal as a curiosity, the odd phenomenon of a solitary Imagist appearing late, in Croatia, without having read a line of Imagist poetry." But we forget the lateness as we read this fresh and innocent work. Well-known abroad is the *Poetry of Juliusz Slowacki,* a Polish author who belonged to the period when his country's poetry had come to its finest flower — that is, about a hundred years ago. Kenneth Mackenzie has translated it, and Eyre and Spottiswoode are the publishers (3s. 6d.). The translation is helpful. So is Joyce Penny's collection of *Latin Lyrics* (Regency Press, 7s. 6d.), another of the gallant ventures launched in the hope that they will be useful to the English reader who knows little Latin, whether less Greek or more.

From America we have received *Blossoms in the Wilderness,* by Grace Nixon Stecher (Wings Press, California, 2 dollars). A sad little note is attached to this beautifully-printed book: "With great regret we announce the death of Mrs. Stecher on 20th November, 1953, just as this book was about to go to press." Very fitting after that is the final verse of "Mount Rainier at Twilight" —

> And there are evenings at the graying hour
> When colour echoes on the quiet dome,
> As the far sunset's disappearing flower
> Lets fall one final petal and goes home.

Another publication from America is *Various Jangling Keys* by Edgar Bogardus in the Yale Series of Younger Poets (Cumberlege, 16s.). W. H. Auden is the editor and selector of the volumes, which now total fifty, so we know what to expect. Love, we are told in one poem, is "a well in the world's backyard, fetid, outdated, black, unstirred, its still waters rank with romance — "

The second volume of the Manchester University anthologies, *Poetry,* edited by D. M. Boyall and H. W. Massingham (Sycamore Press, Leigh, Lancashire, 2s. 6d.), includes thirty-one pieces by thirteen students and members of the staff. It is good to know that the support given to the first issue makes it probable that the anthology will become a permanent feature in the life of the University: and it is also good to observe from the contents that there is sufficient talent to justify it. *Coloured Pebbles*, by Frederick Bratton (Townsend Press, Kingsbury, London), is a collection of verses never more than four or five lines in length: even so, there is too much straining after an effect hardly ever poetical. There is much more genuine feeling in *Poems and Verses* by Frederick John Webb (44 Orpington Gardens, Edmonton, London, 5s.), especially in the little piece about spring — "You pass and the spirit of spring goes by". From the Guild Press, Chesterfield, comes another earnestly-written booklet — *No Man's Land,* by Martin Paterson (2s.), which readers of *The Poetry Review* will wish to put on the shelf alongside other Guild Poets whose names are familiar to us — Carla Lanyon Lanyon, Herbert Bluen, and Rita Spurr.

Sir Walter Ralegh was a poet, and a volume in the "Men and Books" series published by Longmans Green (Ralegh, 10s. 6d.) is from the capable pen of Philip Edwards, who emphasizes the many-sidedness of Ralegh's attainments. There is a brief discussion about the pronunciation of the name Ralegh. It is surprising how much it has varied through the generations. Mr. Edwards suggests that while " 'Rahley' is safe and sound" "Rawley" is preferable to-day. Patricio Gannon, whose name is familiar as a contributor to *The Poetry Review*, has edited a valuable little book about the *Poets of the Rhymers' Club*, (Colombo, Buenos Aires), and among the poems chosen to illustrate his essay is one of four lines "On Marlowe" by Ernest Rhys — founder of the Everyman Library — which was written in response to a challenge on a Marlowe Night at the Rhymers' Club, the group assembled being compulsorily silent for a quarter of an hour: which suggests a new game for our own poets when they gather at some homely fireside.

POETRY ON RECORDS

New readings from the poets which are reviewed here were recorded under the sponsorship of the British Council. Shelley is the first in our list, and his reader, Marius Goring, included the following eight poems on two records:

Ode to the West Wind
Lines written in the Bay of Lerici
The Aziola
A widow bird sate mourning *DX 1874*

The Question: "I dreamed that, as I wandered by the way"
Lines: "When the lamp is shattered"
Stanza written in dejection, near Naples
Song: "Rarely, rarely, comest thou" *DX 1875*

Mr. Goring, fully alive to the poignancy in this selection, reads with a sensitive yet firm interpretation, easily encompassing the variation in mood and line. For that loveliest of lyrics, "Rarely, rarely, comest thou", and the final valediction here, "When the lamp is shattered", the personal element cannot be bereft from the lines; and who can forget that the Bay of Lerici held the final extinguishing agony of so short a life. The "Ode to the West Wind" is a magnificent performance, newly minted and with a refreshing virility.

Readings from Robert Browning, also on two records, are by William Devlin:

A Toccato of Galuppi's
The last ride together *DX 1882*

Pictor Ignotus (Florence 15.)
Two in the Campagna
Home Thoughts, from Abroad *DX 1883*

For most of Browning the eye should follow the text as the ear listens to the interpretation. It is not easy poetry that will flow sensuously over a preoccupied mind. "I never pretended," he wrote, "to offer such literature as should be substituted for a cigar, or a game of dominoes to an idle man."

Is Browning obscure to this year and age? Surely not, but the selection, carefully chosen to illustrate the thought, psychological insight and technique of his longer poems, may well provide the test. Possibly it may help if the blending of content into form, with great intelligence and versatility, is compared with experimental work in the other arts. William Devlin admirably matches the timbre of his voice and his delivery to the quality of the thought-laden line; the scene painting is colourful; the voice irony adult; and where, as in "Two in the Campagna", 'such life here', there is sensitive interpretation.

Six poems by Tennyson are recorded by Michael Hordern:

Mariana
Audley Court *DX 1906*

Ulysses
Now sleeps the crimson petal
Come down, O maid,
Tears, idle tears *DX 1907*

So period and patterned, too near for comfort, too far for sympathy, the first record touches in the dear, dead days with all the detail of a conscientious television producer. Blame not the poet, blame the forward, rushing age where private grief and personal pledge are inarticulate or incomprehensibly expressed.

"Ulysses" is nobly rendered, the imagination is engaged and held: and, with Michael Hordern, "the happy isles" are almost within sight. The three lovely lyrics on the other side are well read in the memory and the mind; and it is high praise to say that the ear tunes the reading to the inner voice with tender recollection.

JOHN GRADDON.

TOWARDS PARNASSUS

THE GREENWOOD PRIZE AWARD 1953

By GEOFFREY JOHNSON

There were one hundred and twenty-two competitors for the Competition in the year 1953. After a first, long and slow exploration of the whole field they were reduced to sixty. Among those thus eliminated were the sincere but imaginatively and/or technically inadequate, the poetical pretenders who aped T. S. Eliot or Dylan Thomas instead of being themselves, the authors of slight and short weather and other descriptive pieces, and those who also virtually ruled themselves out at the start by offering not a single sustained poem, such as is obviously implied in the length-conditions, but a string of separate short poems.

Though all manuscripts that were hand-written or hand-printed were patiently deciphered and assessed, future competitors would be wise to give themselves the best of possible chances by having by hook or by crook their work efficiently typed. Even the most immaculate of scripts in the most seductive of emerald green ink is only handicapping itself if the whole of its two hundred lines is single-spaced throughout and without a single paragraph indented.

The themes of more promising and more sustained poems that were left fell broadly into four classes: the biblical (Esther, Ruth, etc.), the classical (Andromache, Arion, Psyche, etc.), the discursively philosophical religious (a large class) and a handful of poems on literary personalities. Only two humorous poems were entered and these had little merit.

After a second winnowing, twenty-six poems were left. Of these, the following, though not quite distinguished enough for the final count, had commendable qualities:

Olive Rivers ("The Annunciation of Psyche")

Stanley A. Mason, of Zurich ("Dialogue for Lovers")

Alan Dane ("There was a stream")

J. J. Curle ("Epilogue to a Fairy Tale")

Terence Heywood ("Outeniqua Yellowwood")

J. B. Hawkins ("John's Plaint")

Minta Neville Curtis ("Cinderella")

Rita Spurr ("Young Man on the Threshold")

Barbara Bingley ("Street Scene")

Roger Venables ("The Urn of the Four Seasons")

Juanita Peirse ("Variations on a sampler")

Fanny Moore ("The Bridge")

Mark Bourne ("Eighth of July 1822")

D. L. Bowen ("An Old Man Remembers")

Lorna Finlayson ("The City and the Girl")

Henry Newcome Wright of Trinidad ("In the Bolivian Desert")

Edgar Armstrong ("Cyrene")

G. J. Blundell ("Andromache")

The eight finalists were Godfrey Turton ("Saint David's Head"), excellently rhymed iambics; Paul Casimir ("The Ballad of the Green

Christ"), spirited and brimming with West Country colour; Margaret Rhodes ("Milton Blind"), the most sustained effort of all, though the theme, being academic, seemed at first sight perilously chosen; A. V. Stuart ("Sleeping Beauty"), a somewhat worn romantic subject rehandled with a powerfully symbolical suggestiveness; Huw Menai ("I will walk through fallen leaves"), beautiful even in biro and with the poignancy we have learnt to expect from him; Lillian Everts ("The Unlost"), an acute psychological study with Rome as setting; M. Trench ("Long Voyage"), that might have won the prize had she only narrowed her angle instead of widening it in a vain attempt to write a poem on all Life; and finally the sensitive and well-turned "Elegy on a May Evening" of Douglas Gibson.

There was a very close finish between Miss Margaret Rhodes and Miss A. V. Stuart (already twice runner-up), with Paul Casimir, M. Trench and Godfrey Turton close on their heels. Line for line, Miss Stuart's poem was actually finer in quality and more direct in impact, an episode complete it itself — but still an episode. "Milton Blind" is a much longer effort, and despite some faults, for example too little variation in the blank-verse rhythm in spite of the occasionally shortened line, and one or two digressions and depressions, it succeeds admirably on the whole in what the author sets out to convey, the pathos of Milton's old age and also his sublimity. It is a highly finished and supremely honest piece of work, the atmospheric quality of which is subtly cumulative. It does not break out into the flames of great poetry, but there breathes throughout it the evidence of abundant poetical staying power. The prize, then, to Miss Margaret Rhodes for "Milton Blind", which will be printed in a later issue, and the highest honourable mention to Miss A. V. Stuart for her vividly written "Sleeping Beauty".

PREMIUM COMPETITION: REPORT
NEW SERIES, No. 19

by F. PRATT GREEN

One of the advantages of having different people to judge in these Premium Competitions, and of leaving them free to make a personal decision, is that competitors who fail to impress one adjudicator need not despair. Let them try again!

I am in no doubt as to the poem of my choice — "Autumn Leaves in the River" by Mark Bourne (Machynlleth, Montgomeryshire). It has originality and integrity. Its slow-flowing rhythm admirably fits the theme; its use of assonance for rhyme, except to end the stanzas, is skilful; its images are vivid and accurate. Perhaps its words, like the leaves they describe, are at times too congested; perhaps the simile which unfolds the meaning is over-elaborated. But it is a poem that invites meditation.

Among many pleasing poems, I also admired "Spring Waking" by Miss M. Paton (Mill Hill, London), "Stream" by Mrs. V. Charlwood Ross (Rottingdean, Sussex), "Wide-eyed was Homer's Ilium" by E. B. W. Chappelow (Blackheath, London), and, in lighter vein, "Lady by a Lake" by Michael Ivens (London).

AUTUMN LEAVES IN THE RIVER

MARK BOURNE

Some sink, but then so lightly, through the water;
And some, as flimsy, spiral on the surface —
Glide down in wrinkled smiles, or slowly falter
In the great pool, where clasping shadows open,
And make of dead leaves some upturned ghost-aspen,
With water-bough and twigs of river eddies,
Where drowned leaves prosper and dried stalks re-fasten
In hooked communion and blow again,
Gold by the flowing semblance of a lane.

There is a resurrection in the water.
There is a bright congestion that clads branches;
A sunken flourish where the colours alter
Only a little, and the crackling autumn
Dips in the green preservative of ether
And lives — an after-harvest, rouge and molten
On branches undulating, swirling thither,
And with the breath of motion, warm once more
In amber clusters where the fishes soar.

So when the tree of thoughts-once-heightened tatters
On loveless winds, beneath it is a river,
And that gold aspen which rejection scatters
Into leaf-pieces — these a current thither
Bears off and carries to some clear deep morrow
In golden crowds along the water-branches,
And what was lost of you still gilds the shadow,
Mostly a little lovelier thereafter,
And grows in me some deep tree through the pain,
That, buried, but breathes out its gold again.

THE ALBERT RALPH KORN ESSAY AWARD

Again The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing that through the generosity of Mr. Albert Ralph Korn, of New York, a deep lover of poetry and a distinguished American, a new and substantial annual Award is offered to Members in any part of the world.

A prize of Twenty Pounds will be given for the best short essay on "Clarity versus Obscurity in Poetry". It must be original, previously unpublished, and not longer than 1,500 words.

The judges will be appointed by The Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review*. The manuscript must be typewritten and sent anonymously, with the author's name and address accompanying it in a sealed envelope. No MSS can be returned. Closing date for the award is 30th June, 1955.

The outer envelope must be addressed: "Albert Ralph Korn Award, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1., England."

ORIOLE POETRY PRIZE

ORIOLE (the Poets' Group of the Poetry Society) offer an annual prize of £5 this year for a Conversation Piece of not more than thirty-two lines, previously unpublished. The competition is open to all; entrance fee 2s. 6d. per entry. The adjudicators reserve the right to divide the prize, or to withhold it, if in their estimation no entry is of sufficient merit. Competitors must adopt a pseudonym. This should be written in block capitals on the manuscript and on a sealed envelope containing the entrant's name and address. MSS. will not be returned. The winning poem will appear in *Poetry Review*. Closing date 31st July, 1954. Address: Oriole Prize, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London W.1., England.

THE HOWARD PARSONS SONNET COMPETITION FOR 1954

The Poetry Society has the pleasure of announcing a new Competition to succeed the competition in memory of Lord Alfred Douglas for a sonnet Shakespearian or, for this once, Petrarchan, upon any subject.

The prize of Eight Guineas which is generously offered by Mr. Howard Parsons, may be divided at the discretion of the adjudicator. The winning poem or poems will be published with the award in *The Poetry Review*. Competitors must retain copies of their poems as these cannot be returned. The sonnets should bear a definite title and not merely marked "Sonnet". Not more than two sonnets may be submitted by each competitor by 30th June, 1955. Address "Sonnet Competition", The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Entries should bear names and addresses of competitors. No previously published poem may be entered.

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITIONS FOR 1954

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of £20 as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed "The Greenwood Prize", 33 Portman Square London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editorial Board, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*. Closing date is 31st August, 1954.

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION

The above competition continues as before with the total entrance fees as prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the rules as stated in previous issues. Closing date, 1st September, 1954.

PORTMAN SQUARE—SPRING SONG

Not song — but classical Greek drama began the spring; a polished and moving reading from the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, given under the direction of Charles Doran by what is coming to be known as "The Portman Rep". This "company" includes such names as Stanley Mackenzie, George Wood, Redvers Kyle, Kelty MacLeod, and Marjorie Woodall. For this occasion it added to itself an admirably synchronized chorus.

On 12th March, Miss Irene Brent and some of her pupils showed their usual delightful enterprise in selection and presentation, and the following Friday, Wilton Cole gave one of his own highly individual recitals. Our Own Poets on 26th March were Robert Armstrong, Herbert Bluen, and John Graddon, under the chairmanship of Kennedy Williamson. Robert Armstrong had written a charming poem for the occasion: readers of *The Poetry Review* were glad to hear more of the work of Herbert Bluen; John Graddon, our Honorary Treasurer, left his abacus behind and gave us an imaginative scene set in Hampton Court, an evocation of race heritage, in poetry, both fresh and poignant. Mary Giles read worthily for Mr. Bluen.

What an honour and a joy it was to meet A. E. Coppard; venerable, lively and *English* poet and story-teller. Mollie Hudson and Marjorie Woodall read for him with charm and understanding, and, best of all, he gave us "The Fair Young Willow Tree" in his own voice, later ranging happily from the sly humour of "The Trespasser" to the exquisite "Oklahoma Garland". The President was in the Chair.

The Society's Gold Medallists were presented by Mary Giles on 9th April, and on the 23rd, Mr. Cole, companioned by the vivid distinction of Miss Esmé Beringer, raised a banner to St. George. After the brilliance of her lyrics, Miss Beringer held us bewitched by a scene from Macbeth. We must hear her again, and soon.

At the end of the month, *The Poetry Review* was reviewed according to custom, and poems from the current number by Michael Ivens and Leslie Daiken were read by their authors. Some interesting discussion arose concerning these and other items — notably the admonitory poem to a young poet by Herbert Palmer. Such analysis is valuable both to writer and reader, and indicates, we think, a healthy atmosphere in which poetry can grow strong.

With many far-off members in London for The Luncheon (see other pages) a packed audience attended Our Own Poets on 7th May. We were delighted to welcome A. V. Stuart, the Scots poet; she was joined by Odette Tchernine and Kennedy Williamson, whose fine poem "I Was Not There" was chosen for a radio programme by Margaret Rawlings from *The Poetry Review*, January-March, before she had discovered that the author was our distinguished colleague on The Editorial Board.

In "Poems for Parents" Lesley Deane and Kathleen Richardson were joined by Caron Rock. Each reader held up her own mirror to this subject, providing reflections from Ancient Egypt to Christopher Fry and Ogden Nash. A programme of interest to everybody will be Audience Night on 2nd July. Let those who normally blush unseen start looking now for their party piece. We mean to give ours *everything* — or nearly.

K.V.R.

FRIDAY EVENINGS AT PORTMAN SQUARE

"The Battle for Beauty is Never Finally Won"

Leaflets will be distributed shortly with a list of Programmes, arranged by the Readings Committee, for Friday evenings, 6-30 to 7-30 approx., during the autumn at 33 Portman Square — "Everybody Welcome". Admission 1s. Non-members 2s.

AT LUNCHEON ON 8th MAY—OUR "V-DAY"

By ODETTE TCHERNINE

On looking at my diary I noticed that 8th May, 1945, had been "V-Day" in the Second World War, all those packed and fast-moving years ago. Victory Day for the Poetry Society was 8th May, nine years later, because of their successful Luncheon for members and famous guests at Dartmouth House, headquarters of the English-Speaking Union. It was the happiest Poetry Society reunion I can remember.

Thomas Moult is a genuine, beauty-loving and humorous President who presides and speaks well and to the point. On either side of him at the head of the long U-shaped table sat the famous Guests of Honour, invited from other arts—His Excellency The Minister of Finland, Col. A. C. T. White, v.c., Principal of the City Literary Institute, London, Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies, Robert Morley, Louis Golding, Margaret Rawlings, Basil Cameron, R. J. Minney, Rosalind Wade, Erica Marx, and H. R. McKintosh. Miss Rawlings and Mr. Golding were Members of The Poetry Society already, of course, and when Mr. Morley made the announcement during his speech for the Guests that he intended to become a Member, the other Guests of Honour vowed they would join us also.

The atmosphere was happy and unprecious, and by that I mean there was pleasant harmony. We were enjoying ourselves among old friends and acquaintances, and meeting new ones. Mr. Minney, of "Clive of India" fame, sat opposite me. It is a pleasurable feeling to meet again famous editors of one's teen-age beginnings!

Our President spoke, and his words were clear with meaning and understanding. The Minister of Finland, Dr. Soravuo, was erudite and sincere in his Toast to The Poetry Society after lunch, and Colonel White was brilliant, genial and informative from the educational angle. It was natural after this that the good influence of The Voice of Youth, our junior quarterly, should be mentioned during conversation, with especial reference to the consistent editorial work of Mr. Graddon, who also was one of my near neighbours.

We were presented with a *tour-de-force* in verse by William Kean Seymour, in which he referred wittily and with easy flow of language to the names and background of many of those present. Robert Morley was spontaneous and brilliantly "Hippo-witty" and "Little-Huttish" in his comical expressions of mock despair at finding himself in such company. Mr. Morley is so natural and versatile. The changing moods coming and going on his features during lunchtime had been both illuminating and delicious to watch. His speech was a vocal culmination of a wonderful mime play I had been watching surreptitiously four places down through my wine-glass — and between mouthfuls of chicken! — and during good talk with my companions at the table.

Among them were Roberta Shuttleworth, Eva Coker, and Alun Llewellyn, minus Mrs. Llewelllyn (Leslie Deane) who unfortunately was temporarily out of action through a chill. Many other familiar faces were present, and earlier in the proceedings I had met Redwood Anderson, who often is seen at functions, either coming or going — his ultimate destination the mountains of Wales. At the other end of my table were Kathleen Richardson and Robert Armstrong, host and hostess to the Press. Yes, there was much reference to poetry during this gay session, but more poetry will no doubt derive from its stimulus than was quoted there and then.

I may have forgotten some noteworthy detail, but I have not overlooked one thing, and that is the debt we all owe to Mrs. Violet Adamson for her work in

organizing what must be remembered (I repeat) as one of The Poetry Society's happiest and most successful occasions. I notice on looking again at my diary that the printed motto for 8th May is, *Be modest in Victory and cheerful in Defeat.*

Modesty is to be commended in some cases, but ours was tempered with the cheerfulness that is not evoked by defeat but by a sense of going forward in our work to wider horizons.

"OUR GUESTS"

(Toast Given at the Luncheon of the Poetry Society, 8th May, 1954: abridged by permission of the author)

WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR

I rise, Sir, Mr. President, to do
What all good hosts must always have in view,
As part of social custom and belief,
From the first sip of the *aperitif*
To the last fruity savour of the port
(And in a speech that's mercifully short):
To thank our guests for honouring our table
And sporting, as it were, our votive label.
This festive room* though far from Portman Square,
Pervades a kindred, kindly, cultured air,
As trees, though various in form and feature,
Are brothers all, with the one mother, Nature;
With "English-Speaking" as its central span
(Which also takes in speech American) . . .

* * *

"Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,"
And paid excess on transports new and old,
Seen EDITH SITWELL with her brothers ride
From Renishaw to Helicon in pride,
Viewed MASEFIELD take his Pegasus a canter
And start a fox — as Nan did Tam o'Shanter.
Waste lands I've trod with confidential clerks,
And picked the buttercups in Georgian parks
With SQUIRE and MOULT and BLUNDEN and SASSOON —
Ah me, an earlier day, another moon! . . .
And BROOKE was there, and DAVIES, DE LA MARE —
Who still snares lyrics from the Twickenham air,
Still with his burning-glass the sun achieving
In verse that's crystal bright, oh, past believing.

* * *

So to our guests. And first, His Excellency,
Son of an epic land across the sea
Renowned for *Kalevala* and the metre
Of *Hiawatha* — than which none is neater.
And Dr. SORAVUO, in this place

* At the English-speaking Union

We honour you, and Finland, and your race.
GWEN FRANGCON-DAVIES, your *Immortal Hour*
Blooms in our hearts, a slim perpetual flower.
As Portia, Lady Macbeth, Tess and Eve
You lived the art that memories retrieve;
While your Elizabeth Barrett made us feel
The force of love's and poetry's appeal.
From stage to Music and the magic wand
That makes an orchestra as one respond.
How often, BASIL CAMERON, have you woven
Spells from Sibelius, Wagner and Beethoven,
Delighting millions in and out the "Proms."
With sound of strings and trumpets, flutes and drums!

And welcome to our own lass, MARGARET RAWLINGS,
One of the niggard gods' most favoured darlings!
You too have played the pale Elizabeth Barrett,
And Macbeth's lady — voted eighteen carat.
As Ann and Liza you were Shaw indeed,
And Barrie's Mrs. Dearth assuaged our need.
Also, you scatter poetry on the air —
Twice weekly, so that all may have a share —
And televise, and argue — heaven knows what!
How *do* you manage to do such a lot?
So — ARCHIE WHITE, V.C.! Where *have* you been?
I haven't met you since Nineteen-nineteen.
But need I ask — though reference books don't stress it:
The Sandhurst Education Chief, confess it!
And now, in civvies, in the City Lit
(Or Literary Institute) you sit,
Like Socrates, without the hemlock pending.
Thus life's surprises seem to have no ending.
Four other men of parts are on my list . . .
Here's ROBERT MORLEY, actor-dramatist.
Goodness, How Sad you wrote; and there was one
That took the town by storm, *Edward, My Son.*
The Man Who Came to Dinner — how *he* ran,
He and that other, *The First Gentleman!* . .
In *Hippo Dancing* now you charm the Zoo:
I wish some thing of mine the same might do.
And LOUIS GOLDING — how the years go by
Since first you hymned the blue Venetian sky
And made Moult's *Voices* a recording medium
To fill a page and lessen London's tedium.
Two ladies more we welcome: ROSALIND WADE.
Writing good novels is her joy and trade.
Her swift perception, wit and charm endear her,
And as a storyteller few come near her.
And that brave publisher, brilliant ERICA MARX,

'*The Submerged Village* made something of a reputation for Mr. Kirkup . . . . *A Correct Compassion* ought to establish and extend that reputation.'—*Time and Tide.*

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CASSELL

Who's fanned so many bright poetic sparks.
With Hand and Flower you wave them on their way
Into the Great Adventure that's To-day.
Then H. S. McIntosh — I'll nae be wrang
Tae spier to what braw countrie ye belang.
We're glad tae see ye, mon, as birds the bees,
Aye prood to meet the Muses' V. I. P.'s. *
Last but not least, and sterling as a guinea,
That various man of letters, R. J. Minney.
With *Clive of India* he first sprang to fame,
But since he's added novels to his name,
Has edited a score of newspapers,
Made films, and stood for Parliament — yes, sirs!
We saw your *Magic Bow,* with Menuhin playing.
Maybe you're now a Heifetz essaying.
"James" to your friends; good sense and fun diffusing,
Our R. J. Minney needs no introducing.

The Toast I give. *Our Guests!* We're glad to have you!
In all your ploys and plays God bless and save you!

*Very Important Poets

POET'S PLEASURE

NEWS FROM THE CENTRES

By the Editorial Staff

It has been gratifying to receive intimations from readers and Centre members that they are able to replenish our files with old numbers of *The Poetry Review.* The latest instance is a gift from a valued friend of the Society, Miss Laura Smithson, who is well remembered in the London theatre and as an expert in voice production and verse speaking. They also serve who stand on library ladders and rummage among the treasures stored away on top shelves out of reach and not necessarily dusty.

The enthusiasm for Poetry of Mrs. Marie Tello Phillips, of Pittsburgh, U.S.A., has never been confined to writing it. (See *The Poetry Review,* April-June number, p. 106). We have just received from her the welcome information that "excellent groups" of the friends of poetry are established in Coral Gables, Florida, persided over by Mabel Young Davis; Tampa, Florida (Grace Porterfield Palk); and Greenwood, Indiana. We look forward to reports of their doings.

REIGATE

Looking back, what a splendid list of activities this mid-Surrey Centre carried out in 1953! The year began with a reading of *Macbeth* in January, and the members gathered the following month to share their "favourite choice" among "Poems of Evening and Night". Richard Church's poem, "The Lamp", was read in March, and the April programme comprised Gilbert Murray's translation of *Iphigenia in Tauris* by Euripides. Again the members made their choice of Elizabethan poems when May came, and in June Miss Marion Waters gave an illustrated talk on Gerard Manley Hopkins. The autumn was starred with a reading of *Henry IV, Part 2* (September), a "member's choice" of seventeenth-century poets (October), and a reading of Homer's *Odyssey* (November). Mrs. Hicks, the Hon. Secretary, welcomes enquiries at The Alton, Alma Road, Reigate.

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4/6

PETER'S PROGRESS *(by Geoffrey Parsons)*
3/6

ALDINGTON, ASHFORD, KENT

SUFFOLK

Seven new members were welcomed at the February meeting of this Centre, with its headquarters in Ipswich. Here's riches! — riches of encouragement to Miss K. M. Turner and her fellow-workers. They deserve it, for they keep abreast of the arts at their monthly gatherings — for example, when the audience gathered at the Oriental Café for a play-reading of Christopher Fry's *A Phoenix too Frequent.* Miss Turner's address for enquiries is 18 Willoughby Road, Ipswich.

BRIGHTON AND HOVE

The membership of this Centre is growing slowly but steadily, we are pleased to hear, and some younger people are joining. Many delightful meetings have been held since last September. Members particularly enjoyed a talk by Mr. A. Ritchie Stewart on the poetry of Sir Walter Scott. Mr. Stewart is himself from north of the Tweed, and read the resounding lines with a fine flourish. An interesting talk on the aims of Poetry was given by Mr. W. Stone, Director of Education for Brighton, and the Centre hopes very much he will be able to pay another visit shortly.

A very popular meeting took the form of a discussion on "The Criticism of Poetry," and it was pleasing to see that almost every person present had something to say, and was eager to say it. Also there has been a poetry competition, kindly judged by The Rev. D. Pratt-Green, and a verse-reading competition adjudicated by Miss Doris Fryer. This kind lady so much enjoyed being at our Centre that she brought her tape-recorder along to the April meeting, and everybody present was able to read a poem and hear (to their evident horror) their own voices played back to them. Mr. J. Biggs from the Brighton College of Art has promised us a talk on the poetry of Dylan Thomas, in which he is deeply interested. For the May meeting we are to have readings of the Odes of Keats, followed by discussion. Mr. Peter Dunn, the President, reveals his own great enthusiasm in sending these notes. The Brighton and Hove Poetry Centre meets at 3 p.m. on the 3rd Saturday of every month, at Guildry House, 57–8 Marine Parade.

WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE

"Irish Folklore and Irish Poems" — an alluring title to a delightful talk in March at this Centre, and the large meeting gave Miss Clodagh Russell their full appreciation for it. Miss Russell read the early and later poems "appealingly and beautifully," the hon. secretary reports. Need we add her name and address? Hardly, but here they are: Mrs. Elsie M. Gittens, 28 Oatlands Drive, Weybridge.

GUILDFORD

The poet must always be a philosopher. So Miss Roberta Shuttleworth reminded the Guildford Centre at their April meeting — not pedagogically, though, but as a friend of poetry to her friends. This is Miss Shuttleworth's way, and, if we may say so without offence, so it ought to be the way of talk-givers and lecturers in general. Her theme was "The Poet's Inspiration," and she illustrated it with readings from Walter de la Mare, Edith Sitwell, C. Day Lewis, Stephen Spender, T. S. Eliot, and others of an earlier time. A report by Odette Tchernine in *The Surrey Advertiser* included an interesting suggestion. "How interesting," said Miss Tchernine, "would be a reading where poems covering the passage of many centuries were anonymous until the end of the programme. I wonder how many listeners could pin-point the exact cleavage between this epoch and that? For truth, beauty, and artistry are really timeless." Splendid confirmation of these sentiments followed late in the season, when Mr. William Kean Seymour introduced his new book, *Burns into English,* to a delighted audience. Mr. Seymour read several of his renderings, including the poems to a mouse and to a louse. He was ably assisted in the readings by Mrs. Vere Hodge. Mrs. Coker is the hon. secretary, 20 Litchfield Way.

HAMPSTEAD

"Spring and Easter" was the subject of this Centre's April reading — members' selections — and Mr. Anthony Rye read his own poems and extracts from his anthology

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* *The Poetry Book Society may be joined at 7 Albemarle St., W.1.*

Phoebe Hesketh

OUT OF THE DARK

This selection of the poems of 'a superb phrase maker' (C. S. Lewis) has been made by Richard Church. 8/6

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General Offices of The Poetry Society (Incorporated),
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I desire to be enrolled as a member; entrance fee and first annual subscription (22/6d.) enclosed herewith.

(The Annual Subscription becomes due and renewable on the completion of one year from the date of joining. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to The Poetry Society.)

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Date .....

"The Inn of the Birds" in May. The Centre meets on each month's second Monday, at Mrs. Malleson's, 10 Gayton Crescent, Hampstead, N.W.3.

SYDNEY (AUSTRALIA)

Forty-two ladies and gentlemen of this great city overseas have become members of the Poetry Society, which, writes Miss Imogen Whyse, has been established without any publicity. Better still is a footnote to Miss Whyse's report: "At the next meeting more will join, and we expect further growth."

The visit of Dame Sybil Thorndike and Sir Lewis Casson is being looked forward to over here with great eagerness. A distinguished member of the organization, Mr. Douglas Stewart, whose poetry is known on our side, is visiting England at present. Mr. Stewart is literary editor of Australia's leading weekly, *The Bulletin*. His play, *Fire on the Snow*, about Scott's last journey, has been radio'd in his own country. Mr. Stewart will, we hope, go back with happy assurances. "There is a feeling here," writes Miss Whyse, "especially among some of our distinguished writers, that London does not recognize, so perhaps patronizes, Australia." Miss Whyse herself believes this to be untrue, and we confirm her belief.

And now it only remains for the Editorial Staff to wish continued success to all our Centres, home and away, including the following in addition to those already mentioned:

BELFAST:—Meetings monthly, Kensington Hotel, College Square. Hon. Secretary, Miss Hettie Haddock.

BRONDESBURY:—Readings on the first Sunday of each month at 1 Mowbray Road, N.W.6, at 4 p.m. Details from Miss Silvia Newton, L.R.A.M., at the above address.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE:—Mrs. Van den Bergh, Little Basing, Bray, Berks, and Mrs. Day, Westwood, Windsor Road, Maidenhead.

BURGESS HILL:—Meetings second Saturday in each month at Mrs. Lambert's restaurant, 45 Church Road. All enquiries to Miss K. G. Boycott, "Twemlow", Jane Lane, Burgess Hill, Sussex.

CHICAGO (U.S.A.):—*President:* Ruth Crary Clough, St. Clair Hotel, Chicago 11, Ill.

DUMFRIES:—Mr. Irving Miller, 35 George Street, Dumfries, will answer all enquiries.

EALING:—All enquiries to Mrs. Campbell, Savernake School, Astor Rd., Ealing W.5.

FLORIDA (U.S.A.): *President General:* Marie Tello Phillips, 6427 Darlington Road, Pittsburgh 17, U.S.A.

GLOUCESTER:—Miss Katharine N. James, 4 Beaufort Buildings, Gloucester.

HASTINGS, BEXHILL AND DISTRICT:—I. K. Bateman, Esq., Ochiltree House, Hastings.

KENSINGTON:—Enquiries should be sent to the founder, Mr. A. Vivian Burbury, 12 Bassett Road, London, W.10. Meetings are held monthly on a Tuesday evening.

NOTTINGHAM:—Enquiries to Mrs. M. Riley, 20 Medina Drive, Tollerton.

PITTSBURGH (U.S.A.):—Mrs. Marie Tello Phillips, 6427 Darlington Road, Pittsburgh.

SHEFFIELD:—Enquiries to Miss F. G. Stimpson, 23 Silver Hill Road, Sheffield 11. Meetings: Grand Hotel, monthly.

ST. PETERSBURG (U.S.A.):—President. Mrs. Helen T. D. Robinson, 815 Jackson St. N., St. Petersburg 6, Florida.

STROUD:—Hon. Secretary, Miss Mary Martyn, Sunfold, Rodborough Common.

TORONTO (CANADA): All enquiries to Mr. Thos. G. Ballantyne of Apartment 201, 68 Hillside Drive, Toronto 6. Telephone: Gerrard 8877.

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Prelude: Barbarians and Philistines	195
Two Poems by John Bayliss	198
The Endless Stream, Wilfred Gibson	199
The Sleeping Heart, Robert Greacen	199
The Kentaur's Teaching, Naomi Mitchison	200
Age, John Smith	201
Secret Woods, Lady Margaret Sackville	202
Going to Earth, G. D. Martineau	202
Reconciliation, Emanuel Litvinoff	203
They that Live for ever, Stanton A. Coblentz	204
This is the Miracle, Stanley Mason	204
The White Horse, Rita Spurr	205
Windermere Ferry, Edna M. Cass	206
Futility in Cagnes, W. H. Petty	206
Meditation by Starlight, Margaret Stanley-Wrench	207
The Offering, Andrew Keith	208
Answer, Alexander Buist	208
The Cliffs of Lobos, Margaret L. Albanese	209
St. Hilarion, Wrey Gardiner	210
The Song of Eternity, W. Davis	210
The Poet in the Theatre, by Stuart Holroyd,	211
The Mother, Marie C. Stopes	214
They Had Come from that Silent Ocean, Robert Armstrong	216
Escape from Traditionalism, by Kennedy Williamson	217
Creative Evolution, Eve Wilson	218
No Strange Land, Eve Wilson	219
Sleeping Beauty, A. V. Stuart	220
To a Baby, Michael Thomas	222
George Barker: Deep or Drumlie? by Vernon Scannell	223
The Owl, E. B. W. Chappelow	226
Merseyside, Elsie M. Banister	227
A Little Boy, Anthony Edkins	227

Street Scene, Barbara Bingley 228
The Warning, Herbert Bluen 229
"Dear Editors — " Olive Rivers, Dallas Kenmare, A Reader, Malcolm H. Tattersall, Sir Patrick Laird, Winifred Smith 230
Portman Square — End Papers 233
Autumn Evenings at Portman Square 233
Poetry and about Poetry by Stephen Graham 234
All my Senses by F. Pratt Green 236
Three Emerging, by Kathleen Valmai Richardson 237
Surface and Centre, by Geoffrey Johnson 239
Two Important Reprints, by E. D. Bangay 240
They Made or Marred, by John Graddon 240
Poetry "Down Under", by F. Pratt Green 241
From Persia to Paradise, by Robert Armstrong 243
Milton Blind, Margaret Rhodes 244
Premium Prize Report 248
Valley of Dry Bones, by Frances Howard 248
Prize Competitions 250
Poet's Pleasure: News from the Centres 252
Poet's Progress: The Annual Meeting 254

TO WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTORS

1. All MSS must have the name and the address of the author stated in the top left-hand corner of the first page. If he is a member of the Society a bracketed M should be added.
2. One side only of the paper must be used.
3. Reasonable margins and top space should be left.
4. A self-addressed envelope must always be enclosed either stamped or, if an overseas contributor, the Coupon-Response International. Otherwise, no MSS will be considered. Loose stamps cannot be regarded as a substitute. Except in rare instances an introductory letter is not necessary.
5. In their own interest writers should notice that poems over thirty lines in length have a very doubtful chance of acceptance.
6. If helpful editorial suggestions are made with a returned MS, please do not reply challenging the advice. Requests for criticism, moreover, are not invited. It should be remembered that The Poetry Society already has a well-organized service for expert advice, as announced in each issue.
7. Not more than four poems should be submitted at one time. Two is an ideal number.
8. The Editorial Board does not accept responsibility for the safe custody and return of any unsolicited MSS. Authors are requested not to write expressing anxiety lest their MS is lost in the post. MSS are seldom or never lost in the post.
9. Acceptance or rejection of a MS cannot reasonably be expected until at least three months have elapsed. A decision may take longer. Inquiries by telephone cannot be dealt with.
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Competition

These pages—An Offering to
JOHN REDWOOD-ANDERSON
"O heart of change
reaching forever beyond itself"

Prelude . . .

BARBARIANS AND PHILISTINES

"There is always something to look at, but young writers to-day have on the whole lost the taste for looking, except perhaps at the seedy and the drab . . . Our attitude towards the beauty and splendour of the world has become more and more grudging, as if we felt that it offered us an irrelevant and unworthy consolation." . . .

Timely words these, and welcome as a warning for all too many of our mid-century poets to take to heart, especially valuable because they are quoted from *The Times Literary Supplement* which, during its present regime, cannot be accused of favouring traditionalism at the expense of unorthodoxy. The advice which follows that eminent journal's appraisal of present-day writing might have been contributed by any member of our Editorial Board, who, indeed, rejoice to know that they are not alone in their catholic attitude towards the arts: "One of the writer's central duties at all times is to praise the wonders of creation." Life is a glory, in spite of its anxiety and disillusion. And writers will do better work if they have "a poignant sense of a beauty and graciousness in life that is passing them by."

* * *

The direct nature of the advice just quoted, which appeared in the "T.L.S." a few weeks since, will be much appreciated by those believers in *life as a glory* who have been dismayed at the spectacle of Matthew Arnold's Barbarians and Philistines — or, rather, their successors — on the rampage, sneering, snubbing, belittling, log-rolling, shouting down anything which is not "seedy and drab", shouting down anyone who refuses to show a preference in literature for Boccaccio and Rabelais, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, and the successfully sordid pigmies of a moment who, according to them, have outmoded the giants of all time.

Barbarism and Philistinism are dangerously near being on top to-day in radio and television, the theatre and the newspaper. But they are not having things all their own way in literature. Add to the *Times Literary Supplement* quotations the instance of a certain journalistic critic and the

recent boosting of him as "great" — until a valiant University Fellow quite properly checked it with the authoritative reminder that no critic can be so regarded unless he is a creative artist as well: and the "great" one aforesaid has shown little sign of being a creator so far.

As for "shouting down", perhaps the best defence against it was amusingly indicated the other day by a correspondent of *The Manchester Guardian*. He protested against an editorial comment that the description of a British ambassador out-shouting Hitler in 1939 was "not very edifying". "Good God! sir, it is one of the few edifying passages in that whole squalid story." On the principle that attack is the best form of defence the only way to cope with a shouter is to shout back.

* * *

Let us shout back at someone, here and now. A comment on the recent publication of a translated novel by Emile Zola is not out of place after the paragraphs with which these notes have begun. A youngish critic has contributed to it a preface in which he professes to explain why "so tremendous a work" should have been "withheld from the main body of English readers for nearly seventy years". In the anti-English fashion so prevalent among low-highbrows of any generation he writes:

> The answer is very simple and very English. The novel was the victim of one of those periodic and distasteful exhibitions of moral indignation which still unfortunately besmirch the good sense and rational decency of this country.

Good sense, rational decency? . . Well such a denunciation of "that unsavoury demonstration of Anglo-Saxon righteousness" calls for a statement of the *facts*. It was France, not England, that denounced and boycotted Zola's novel immediately it appeared in print. All the Paris newspapers published the literary manifesto of five leading authors of the day, and this is how they showed their appreciation of the "Master's" new work:

> Not only is its observation superficial, its procedure antiquated, and its narrative destitute of anything characteristic, but the note of indecency is sounded still deeper, sinking to such a level of indecency that, at times, one seems to be standing before a cess-pool. The Master has sunk to the very depths of uncleanness.

Anatole France, who cannot be accused of anything resembling Anglo-Saxon prejudice and self-righteousness, followed with a summing-up of Zola and his book as tasteless, ignorant, ugly, even abominable — "the grace of things escapes him, beauty, majesty, simplicity, vie with one another in avoiding him . . ." He has a sickening style — "he has no taste, and I have come to believe that want of taste is that mysterious sin of which the Scripture speaks, the greatest of sins, the only one which will not be forgiven." Then, after speaking of Zola's "detestable" fame — "his work is evil", Anatole France concludes:

> There are on earth magnificent forms and noble thoughts. M. Zola does not know it. He does not know that the graces are seemly, that philosophic irony is indulgent

and gentle, and that human things inspire only two feelings in well-regulated minds: admiration or pity. M. Zola is entitled to the deepest pity.

* * *

An invitation to members of The Poetry Society has come from the Oscar Wilde Centenary Committee for the morning of October 16th, when at 34 Tite Street, Chelsea, London, a L.C.C. plaque commemorating Wilde as "Wit and Dramatist" will be unveiled by Sir Compton Mackenzie. The ceremony is timed for 11.30, and includes the reading of memorial tributes from surviving friends.

October the sixteenth is the centenary date of Wilde's birth. His son, Vyvyan Holland, has celebrated it by retelling the tragic story in *Son of Oscar Wilde*, just published by Rupert Hart-Davis. It is rather disconcerting, though, to find included in this book a "poem in prose", not previously available, in which a "Lord of Language" uses the words "amongst" and "among", "whilst" and "while", and "wonderful things" and "wondrous things", all in a few sentences. How the Oscar Wilde we know would have shuddered at "amongst" and "whilst"! . . .

* * *

To one of our own poets we now pay tribute. This number is "dedicated" to John Redwood-Anderson, whose poem "All Passion Spent" was published in the April-June *Poetry Review*. More than thirty years ago Mr. Redwood-Anderson's first book appeared, and he has been writing poetry and collecting it into volumes ever since. His life, indeed, has been devoted to his art, although, as *The Manchester Guardian* has written, his recognition "comes altogether short of his powers and achievement".

Once upon a time John Redwood-Anderson had ambitions in music, studying the violin under César Thomson of Brussels. Fortunately from our point of view he met Emile Verhaeran and their friendship led to his abandonment of music for poetry. In September this year he married Gwyneth Anderson, whose first volume of poetry, entitled *A Time to Speak*, was published by The Hand and Flower Press.

* * *

It is with sorrow that we report the death, after a long illness, of Mr. E. Guy Pertwee, some time a member of the General Council of The Poetry Society. We hope to print a memorial tribute to him in our next number.

And to Mr. A. V. Burbury, of the present General Council — a Centre representative — the Poetry Society offers deep sympathy on the death of his wife, who has been a familiar figure at the literary gatherings with which the Society is connected.

* * *

Postcript.—An old question repeated: *John O'London's Weekly* exists no longer — What is happening to taste and culture in the Western world? Here and in America the periodicals which have influence are now to be counted on the fingers of two hands . . .

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

TWO POEMS

JOHN BAYLISS

BOMBAY

Bright green and red, the trees about Bombay
Hang in the dust this summer afternoon.
The peanut-seller sleeps beside his tray,
While beggars hug the shade and pray the moon
Will soon raise up a cool wind from the sea.

From a white house comes music endlessly,
Jarring the quiet, jangling the hot air.
Then trains and taxis join the symphony,
Shaking the leaves, till a blue sari there
Beckons the thirsty wanderer to tea.

RUPERT STREET MARKET, LONDON*

Strawberries and books beside a theatre —
A connoisseur could look for more in vain —
Though June so often chooses to deter
With an unwished-for christening of rain
Those Englishmen who love the open air.

Yet in this green arcade of cucumber
Where cherries and potatoes roundly tell
The solid charm of all that's circular,
The onion's more noticable smell
Drifts through the stalls like some loose character,

While roses here, incontinently red,
Call through the alleys to Old Compton Street
As if to rival some rich auburn head,
Yet some of these fall under hurrying feet,
Dyeing to strawberry before they're dead.

Only on summer nights when all is still
And the last drunk goes echoing away,
Rising beneath the cool grey window-sill
The summer scents seem sweeter than by day
And a lost fragrance fills the market hill.

*Off Shaftesbury Avenue.

THE ENDLESS STREAM

WILFRID GIBSON

Still on it flows, though whence, from what far source
The stream first took its course
Man cannot say;
Fed by unnumbered tributary rills
In outpour sounding down our island's hills —
Still flows the endless stream day after day —
The stream whose varied singing the heart thrills
While down a rocky glen exultantly
Plashing in spates; or faring placidly
Through tranquil meadowlands that lie
Radiantly flowered beneath a sunny sky —
On flows the stream of English poetry.

THE SLEEPING HEART

ROBERT GREACEN

Nor sea nor wind can wake
The sleeping heart. At anchor then
It lies, and need not take
Into its last deep fold
The taut world's angry cries.
Asleep but not indifferent
It guards itself from mad alarms
And rests content.

But wait! what noise is that?
Hark! hark! the dogs do bark
And beggars sack the town!
New cries on every side are heard,
Pretenders jostle for the crown!

And yet at peace the sleeping heart
Recks not of strife and sharp debate;
Nor sea nor wind can shake it now,
Nor love's assaults can break it now.
Asleep but not indifferent,
It rests content.

THE KENTAUR'S TEACHING

NAOMI MITCHISON

They have left the brave
And flowery meadows,
They have left the Cave
Of dreams and shadows,
The voice of the grave
And calm-eyed Kentaur,
And the years of joy:
For the drenching wave,
The oar-tugged Argo,
The flames of Troy.

So now I only
Go forest-ranging
Through our hunting places,
With bow held slackly,
Remembering faces,
Remembering voices,
Before the changing —
The dooms and choices:
Parting of friends
That left me lonely.

I go my ways
No more with singing
And shouting loudly,
With head held proudly
And light foot springing,
With friends to praise
Or to leap and warn me.
If the boar turns quick,
Or the mountain lion,
If the hurt foot slips
Or the spear casts short,
They will not mourn me,
They will not hear
Nor yet remember,
From the swords and ships
And the close-held fort.

So no use crying
And no use hoping,
If the spear has failed,
And the thigh-bone's broken
With the wet blood drying
Where the claws have caught me.
So I watch and guard
And I run in silence
As Chiron taught me.

AGE

JOHN SMITH

It is the loneliness that age can bring
That is more terrible than pain of dying;
The long days when the heart is a hard stone,
A growth in the breast; when memory aches in the bone
Like a bruise in winter's cold; when the eyes are dry
With outspent tears for youth and hope put by;
When all that love is the extinguished fire
That was the heat and centre once of all desire.

Useless to assuage that grief, the memory
Feeds the dull ache; the imagined ecstasy
Swells to a sweet perfection, never known,
In the poor heart that now must love alone.
All anger lies undone; all hate dispersed
By death's disruption, of all wars the worst.
Each thought is a caught breath in the taut throat lying;
An anguish on the tongue; a sob of the heart's crying.

It is the empty house; the quiet upon the stairs
Whose every step echoes the heart's despairs;
Chill autumn sunlight where no shadow is;
The long night that's a sleep of memories.
Ah, when the sun's put out and wind grows cold
A wordless winter robs our life of gold;
And where's the comfort of that season's sleeping
If, waking at the last, our hearts may know no spring?

SECRET WOODS

LADY MARGARET SACKVILLE

I know the silent woods enfold
  Such secrets in their green and brown,
Whereof, could the least word be told,
  'Twould make a poet of a clown.

Dumb do they stand: I ask in vain
  Some confirmation of belief
That all the lore the worlds contain
  Is less than one bewildering leaf

Fully resolved and understood
  In all its strangeness, loved and known —
The Tree of Evil and of Good
  Still in our homely soil is sown;

And still prohibited it stands
  Mysterious, as in Eden, when
Eve's happy and unconscious hands
  Let loose man's misery on Men.

GOING TO EARTH

G. D. MARTINEAU

Hell is not under the earth:
  It is on its face,
Where the wheel is a maker of slaves — and a foe to grace,
Where the green of the hill has been gashed by the caravan-herds,
And the yowl of the crooner is rising to drown the birds.

Hell is not under the earth:
  It is in the sky,
Whence the scream of the jet hurls its message of hate, roof-high.
Hell is filling the heart, till it roars to an engine's thump,
And the spirit of man is distilled from a petrol-pump.

Hell is not under the earth.
  I think Heaven is there —
In the noiseless deeps where a few may be freer than air.
Through the grottoed haunts, where the hunted feet once trod,
Let us follow the whispering stream that may lead to God . . .

In a traffickless calm, that is cleansed of the microphone,
Let the silence heal — let us carve a fish on a stone.

RECONCILIATION

EMANUEL LITVINOFF

Now that another season breeds its summer
and skies are a surprise of swallows
as the croaking raven flies away, away,
I wake to the sun and ask: Is it forgotten?

Do not offer the consolation of trees,
nor praise the liberal and forgiving earth
ambiguous with promises that birth
revives the slain sweet voice of Abel.
In that eternal dark where Abel lies
is earth not always widowed of its green?

Though swallows then fly back the stolen summer
and time has grown a skin over the wound,
disowning now the winter-long despair,
can you or I forget, forget?

For soon the wind blows summer here no more
and frost devours deciduous happiness,
and all who hunger and lie fearfully
under the inexplicable, moody sky
reproach our luck and deform our pity.

So, startled from that sleep that is forgetting,
our fear recalls the abyss of our wound,
all that is lost, unsung, unwept, unspoken;
undone the world our brother does not breathe.

We the living, are always arrogant and
tender with guilt for the poor among us.
All yesterday's wit and wealth and amorous conceit,
how humbly they submit, how meekly
their flesh falls away before the bayonets of grass.

Poorest of the poor, these passive conquered lie
within the empire of earthworm and ant, lonelier
among their multitudes than a dog in the desert.
Slayer of Abel, this is my grief:
Until your blood runs out
you are more brother to me than these.

THEY THAT LIVE FOREVER

STANTON A. COBLENTZ

What is the witch-fire sparkling in time's eyes
That draws us to the lamp of towered fame?
Years may preserve the syllables of a name,
But make a dwindling ghost of him who dies.
This being that strode the earth, and plumbed the skies,
Throbbed, and knew passion, and life's various flame,
Fades to a straw-man that the mobs acclaim
With gaudy fables, undeliberate lies.

Only by domes we fashion, reared so well
They watch the rise of states and doom of kings;
By dreams that throb in music men compel
Victory above the shadow-crowd of things.
Who Homer was, or what, no man can tell,
But deep through time the *Odyssey* still rings.

THIS IS THE MIRACLE

STANLEY MASON

This is the miracle, then:
That between the thin-spun gulfs
Where the stars are motes of dust
And the tense atom's vast
Uncharted exiguity,
Territories beyond our ken,
There should have burst this tree
To bridge with branches green
The cold abyss between
And bear the fruit of law
And beauty rainbow-rare
In the sterile wastes of air;
That here on the dark sense
Of a moss, a fish, an ape,
The huge dawn should break
Through a brief and delicate lens
Fashioned by chance and change
In a million centuries;

This is the miracle, then,
That glimpsed between hurrying worlds
For a moment, a stirring and strange
Image, your beauty lies
In the cool wells of my eyes.

And dies then, trembles and dies,
Crumbles in the cell,
A story and a dream
That the chill rock denies
And the fossil will not tell;
But only in seas of time
Rises from tideless hours
And from the aeons cold
The island that is ours.

THE WHITE HORSE

RITA SPURR

The white horse of death came steadily
From the dark-heavy woods
And over the bridge,
Shutting out with metallic clang
For so many minutes
The soft gurgling of the stream,
Which had drugged my drowsing spirit
With the serenity of limpid music.

Hypnotic the sound of hoof on stone
Drawing me, unwilling, to the window
Just a moment late,
So, when I gazed through the small, square pane
Into a shimmering haze of moonlight,
The horse's form was already vanishing,
Unreal, floating almost into the cold
Colourless space that was the night.

With the last clopped sound fading
In my ears, I turned back laughing
From the moon's strange magic
To the warm welcome of my bridal bed;

Not recognizing, in that double ecstasy,
That death will call and be forgotten
While love compels anew a pulsing life.

WINDERMERE FERRY

EDNA M. CASS

Because your ways are clear to me indeed,
I hear you creeping quietly across
The moonlit stretch of water, then a reed
Cracks loudly in the ice-encrusted moss.

The pebbles scrape and sundry creaks and jars
Assure me I can join you, and then I
Sail forth upon white peaks and twinkling stars.
Are you above or underneath the sky?

From nearing shore a cottage window gleams;
A startled pheasant leaves its gaunt-limbed tree
Recalling me to warmer, homely dreams,
While you sail off into Infinity.

FUTILITY IN CAGNES

W. H. PETTY

The old, round-tourist wanderer,
The café table
With the bright group of syphon and amber,
The waiter in the red-stain coat:
They still call with the smart sweet bluff
Of careful civilization.

It was indeed not yesterday
And not to-day
That, tinkeringly, I crushed a few cherries,
Gradual wounds on my fingers,
And dropped them into the quiet sea,
The hand-warm glass of lust-cold wine.

Yes, I wrote about that symbol
Intriguingly,
With a brisk amusement, end quick perceived,
And entertained a lizard's tail,
Not to-day and not yesterday,
But a long war or so ago.

MEDITATION BY STARLIGHT

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH

Walking alone under the web of stars
Which tremble as the gossamer does with dew,
I shape in my mind a jewel of praise and worship
As the grain of the silent crystal grows in the ground.
Praise God for all things. The thought is warm, and worn,
Like silver that time has softened to mildness of rain,
A lifted chalice. Generations praying
Have touched with adoring hands, have bent in worship,
Unworthy, and yet certain of the unproven.
Praise God for all things, for light's certainty
Whose witness is the star; for the intricate
And overlapping perfection of the bird's
Feathers that like a pinecone, lap him in
With inlaid pattern, tortoiseshell and pearl;
Scale of the bud, glossy as a beast's skin,
Filigree leaf, and flowers on whose velvet petals
The living dust trembles as on the wing
Of butterflies, each like a chord that rises
Up from the dominant steady as a lark.
Pattern, echo and brother to the other,
For darkness, too, of pain that is no darker
Than the deep core of the rose, unfolding, opening
As a heart unfolding its crimson valves like petals,
Each linked, each bearing the seal and signature
That binds and makes them whole, whose wholeness sings
In a loud cry of praise. No thought is lonely,
No thought is new; comfort like a fire
Is here, not ash, to know the words that slide
Into the brain are warmed with touch of hands,
Have slipped with the secret blood through other veins,
Making the stranger kin. There is no secret
And nothing is hidden. Bare beneath the stars
We lie, and all is lifted up to God,
For He shared all, the loss, the pain, the dull
Lead sweat of fear, and death's finality.
Yet through the rod of agony, the Cross,
He made that end a key and a beginning.

THE OFFERING

ANDREW KEITH

Midnight had wheeled away,
The Star dropped low,
When he came staggering
Through wind-drift snow.

Shepherds had brought their gifts,
Now the Child slept.
Stumbling, the old man fell,
Blindly, he wept.

He who had hoped long,
Hoping no more,
Lay in the light that spilled
Through the half-door.

Slowly his last breath sighed
On the hushed air,
Offering he had none
Save the journey there.

ANSWER

ALEXANDER BUIST

In this small, ancient Church,
With fitful sunshafts lighting deep-set windows,
We sought God's blessing on our new adventure,
Conversationally, hand in hand,
Late passion laid aside,
In quiet reverence.

Ironical it seemed
There, where time-worn memorials
Dwelt only on Man's sin, exhorting him
Repentant to await his Day of Judgement
By a Jehovah God.

Yet there was no hypocrisy in our approach,
No melodrama; we felt, quite simply,
A younger God was taking cognizance
Of a situation far beyond our handling;

And His small House, set in green, rain-washed pastures,
  Facing the broad tideway and far-off, misty hills,
Had received so many self-dedications,
  Confessions, spoken and unspoken,
Through all its centuries,
  That His mercy was large enough
To-day as yesterday,
To-morrow as to-day . . .

A sudden warmth of evening sunlight
  Flooded the cold stone on which we knelt,
Aureoled your bent head like an adoring angel's;
  In one great moment's silence
A Still Voice spoke . . .

We rose and left on tiptoe,
  Knowing the truth of Scripture;
'Who wait on the Lord shall find their strength renewed'.

THE CLIFFS OF LOBOS

MARGARET LEWIS ALBANESE

Forever silent in a storm of sound
The cliffs of Lobos crouch above the sea,
Gripping with granite claw a coastal reef
Where ages sink to nothingness, and headland
Foam churns forth its ancient conflict with
The tide. Creation still is rumoured in
The wave that sires a tidal pool, and grains
Of sand are counted more than years. This
Is continent's end where earth once thrust her shoulders
Heavenward, and high on the crag a snail
Now draws its silver graph of patience; this
The home of cypress root that tells how wind
Has sculptured trunk and bough to a drift of green,
And day and night the deep mouthed ocean thunders
A latter day defiance of the land,
While cliffs still rear their gryphon heads alert
And Deity still carves the fog-held stone.

ST. HILARION

WREY GARDINER

How much can I forget, how much remember
Of the willow days, the cypress after dark
Pointing a doubting finger up to God,
Cold and calculating among His burnt-out stars?

Old are the stones, the medieval castles
That crown still the pine covered hills of Cyprus,
Looking over the dark sea to the barbarous future,
The last annihilation that none will ever tell of.

THE SONG OF ETERNITY

W. DAVIS

"I want to write something original"
said the monkey.
"There is nothing new under the sun,"
said the lion.
"Oh, I don't know,"
said the sparrow, sucking a lollipop,
"Someone once said the moon was
Cream cheese, but now they say it isn't."
"That's all very well,"
interrupted the owl,
"But that doesn't explain why trees
Grow up and the rain comes down."
"Anyone can answer that,"
croaked the toad,
"But who knows why the tides rise
And fall, and where they go when low?"
"Who knows why all is all,"
whispered the wind,
"Who knows the end of things
And all beyond?"
"Who knows, who knows?"
sang the echoes.
"I know, I know,"
He cried; and answered all things.

THE POET IN THE THEATRE

By STUART HOLROYD

Blind Homer chose to sing of heroic events and battles long ago in hexameters. Bardic singers of all nations were led by some universal instinct to elaborate their dramatic tales with the enrichment of poetry. Early epics in all languages — "Beowulf" and "The Song of Roland" are examples — were written in verse. From these facts we may infer that primitive man was naturally ecstatic and that prose as a literary form is as much a product of civilization as the steam engine. We may also infer — and this with certainty — that poetry and drama have been inseparably connected ever since man became aware of his creative potentialities.

The two elements are complementary, and either would be sadly impoverished without the other. Much of the greatest poetry — the poetry written by Homer, Shakespeare, Milton, and Goethe — is dramatic, and for those memorable moments of emotional intensity which occur in great drama poetry is the natural, almost the only, medium of expression.

I will venture further and say that there is a point at which drama becomes poetry; where the drama is so charged with imagination and feeling that it suggests deeper levels of meaning, throws open magic doors revealing to the imaginative eye vast and resplendent horizons. This point has been reached by a number of prose dramatists, among them Ibsen, Chekhov, Strindberg and J. M. Synge.

Immediately before starting work on his first play, *Don Juan*, James Elroy Flecker wrote in a letter to his wife, "I'm sick of writing pretty lyrics." Most poets have, at some time in their life, experienced this feeling, and been tempted to apply their brushes to the larger canvas of drama. Milton and Dryden gained much of their success as dramatists, while Browning and the Romantic poets, Byron and Shelley, were relative failures.

In the present century the temptation has been no less great, in spite of the fact that the poet as would-be dramatist is faced with problems which did not worry his predecessors. The greatest of these problems is how to write poetic drama which is truly contemporary. It is vain to write in the traditional, Shakespearean manner. Stephen Phillips, Laurence Binyon and other dramatists tried it in the first decade of the century, and they passed by like the ghostly kings in *Macbeth*, a procession of insubstantial Shakespearean shadows.

J. M. Synge wrote in one of his notebooks: "In countries where the imagination of the people and the language they use, is rich and living, it is possible for a writer to be rich and copious in his words, and at the

same time to give the reality, which is the root of all poetry, in a comprehensive and natural form." To-day there is no popular imagination to stimulate the poet and to enable him to write imaginatively and, at the same time, realistically. Poetry seems remote from actual life and the poet, when he comes into the theatre, is obliged to choose between his poetry and the convention of naturalism. The choice is not an easy one. He has seen that, in the hands of a master, naturalism can be a penetrating instrument for exploring the human situation, and that it has within its range of expression all the nuances of feeling which are within human experience. He cannot, without first devoting much serious thought to the problem, relinquish the ground won for him by Ibsen, Chekhov and Shaw.

Of the poet-dramatists writing in England to-day, three command particular attention. They are Christopher Fry, T. S. Eliot and Ronald Duncan. We shall see how each of these has reacted to the situation explained above and try to discover if any of them have laid secure foundations for a new age of poetic drama.

Having a very agile imagination and a gift for verbal pyrotechnics, Fry is probably the most popular of these dramatists. But he has chosen the easiest way out of the dilemma — in the abandonment of realism. All his work is a fantasy, and his characters are mere shadows. He is an accomplished manipulator of the Word, he makes it dance for us in a very diverting manner, but when the seventh veil falls and the dancer disappears we realize that there was nothing but the dance. The only drama that is compelling in the theatre is drama arising out of the conflict of characters.

T. S. Eliot has made a more serious attempt to solve the problem of language, but his efforts have not been appreciated by many critics. His confessed aim has been to evolve "a form of verse in which everything can be said that has to be said". In making this attempt to effect a compromise between naturalistic and poetic drama he has been obliged to use poetry very sparingly, for he believes that its use is justified only "when the dramatic situation has reached such a point of intensity that poetry becomes the natural utterance, because then it is the only language in which the emotions can be expressed at all".

Mr. Eliot has been very clear-sighted in dealing with the problems confronting the contemporary playwright, but he has not yet succeeded in writing a first-class play. All his plays have been experiments in technique, and this preoccupation has prevented him, except perhaps in *Murder in the Cathedral*, from being emotionally involved in the situations of his characters. Consequently that warm humanity, which is as much a part of the tradition of English drama as it is of the English character, is absent from his work.

The Confidential Clerk is evidence that Mr. Eliot has, after a period of

assiduous experimentation, perfected his dramatic technique. Surely he has now reached the stage where he "dare make more liberal use of poetry". But poetry, he has told us, can only be used when the dramatic situation demands it, and in *The Confidential Clerk* he has not provided one scene which could not be adequately expressed in prose. To develop a style of writing for the purpose of interpreting a "peculiar range of sensibility" and then to devote it to the expression of ideas and emotions which are commonplace seems to me to be the very height of supererogation.

Ronald Duncan also attempted, in his play *Stratton*, to effect a compromise between poetry and naturalism. But the poetical instrument for exploring the psychology of human relationships must be very delicately attuned, and the uneven distribution of poetry and prose in this play together with some diffuseness in the treatment made it appear little more than a pastiche of Mr. Eliot. It is his religious dramas, *This Way To The Tomb* and *Our Lady's Tumbler*, that are Mr. Duncan's valuable contribution to the contemporary theatre. Indeed *This Way To The Tomb* is one of the most original dramatic works of our time. Described by the author as a "Masque and Anti-Masque" the play is an account of man's search for God.

After his not very successful attempt in the Eliot manner, Ronald Duncan returned to his earlier style in the religious drama *Our Lady's Tumbler*. It is in such a play, where he is not chained to the exigencies of naturalism, that his genius finds its best expression. He invests his characters with a genuine human warmth which is absent from the creations of Fry and Eliot; his humour is wholesome and unsophisticated, and his religious emotion inspires him to write poetry of rare beauty. But admirable though these plays are, they do not provide an answer to the problem of how to reconcile poetry and naturalism, a problem which Mr. Duncan himself, by writing *Stratton*, acknowledged as being important.

We conclude, then, that two distinct tendencies are perceptible in modern poetic drama. On the one hand is the tendency exhibited by Fry and Duncan, anticipated by W. B. Yeats, to be completely imaginative, to cast overboard all the trappings of naturalism and allow the imagination of the poet full scope. On the other hand the patient and meticulous Eliot has perfected a form of verse which retains all the advantages of naturalism and yet admits poetry when it is in harmony with character and situation.

This is the inheritance of the new generation of poet-dramatists. They have the advantage of the earlier playwrights' experience, but they will continue to have the same choice to make and we cannot foresee which of the two roads the current of literary fashion will follow.

THE MOTHER

MARIE C. STOPES

I

In agony a child is born:
Faint is the light, futile the strife,
Weakened the aching source of life.
The door is cut with burning knife,
Life enters with the morn.
Mother! your life is torn, stones cut your feet
Where pathways meet.

II

A man child in his mother's arms
Soft as a flower, rose-seeking lips
Continue thieving as he clips
The bounteous spheres he nestling sips
For strength to flourish dimpled charms.
Mother, hide your alarms. Love holds its sway.
You guide his way.

III

By cushioned first steps she is bending
To soften happy baby falls.
In flower-starred fields they play with balls.
Into her life a despot crawls
Demanding every hour's attending.
Mother! The twig is bending: Watch the ash.
Beware the lash.

IV

Long days of mingled sun and showers
See ring-a-roses, hide and seek,
The boy a King, the mother meek.
A poet's royal words they speak.
Sunlit the warmth of wheeling hours.
Mother! the ways in bowers where beauty plays
Seem endless days.

V

A fat contented pony strays
Into their daisied field. The boy
Fondles its tail and mane. The joy
Of sitting on its back a ploy
Bearing a princeling in a daze.
Mother that hoof may craze: the field is small,
Its fence not tall.

VI

Daily to school she holds his hand,
Lifting him high o'er guttered mire.
Escape lurks in his mind, desire
To burn such bonds with passion's fire,
Free and alone at last to stand.
Mother! wide lies the land. Stones line the street.
Stones cut your feet.

VII

Pony outgrown, a horse comes round,
Embossed its saddle, gilt its bit,
A long white road, with sunlight lit
Faces the horse. The lad can sit
Leaping the fence in one swift bound.
Mother! You hear no sound, waiting so long,
Lone nights are wrong.

VIII

A girl with moon-lit face is found.
Soon she has caught his empty heart,
Toys with his will to play man's part,
Then plunges deep her poisoned dart:
He lies a captive in her ground.
Mother! you hear no sound, yet cannot sleep.
Mother, you're right to weep.

IX

The grasping girl says, "My small hound
Ails on his downy cushioned bed.
On something warm, warm, live and red
To gain real health he must be fed,
You know where some such food is found."
Oh Mother! make no sound. What does she seek?
Quiet! don't shriek.

X

"I cannot guess," he trembles, "where
Such feast is to be found. *You* say,
Then I will every word obey.
That your small hound shall live his day.
Anything I possess you share."
Mother! You've naught to spare. What more may be,
You cannot see.

XI

The girl replies with cold disdain
"Your Mother's heart my hound must eat."
To her dazed lover, "I repeat.
Your Mother's heart my hound *must* eat.
Swift! Cut it out, she'll feel no pain.
Your Mother will not know. Go! Swiftly bring
That magic thing."

XII

Carrying his Mother's dripping heart
His hurrying foot trips on a stone,
Stumbling he falls; then sore and lone
Shivers to hear that heart bemoan —
"*My darling, must we part?*" *The heart's last spurt* —
"*Child, are you hurt?*"

THEY HAD COME FROM THAT SILENT OCEAN

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

I have heard tell of it, yet I have not seen it.
But I have seen them coming in,
Limping homeward with haggard sails
Across attendant waters
Into the hospitals of their harbours;
And I have seen the eyes of their seamen,
Fixed and dim from great torment.
I have seen beyond their eyes
Into the toneless depths of their transfigured souls
When they have spoken in whispers
Dead words of a dead yesterday
On the borderland of a dead to-morrow.

I have known silences in woods
When the nightingales have hidden their singing
In a numb despair at the screech of a raven.
I have seen faces carved in alabaster
At the first impact of immortality.
But the pity of the universe on black apparelled wings
Arose when I saw them homing;
Coming in with haggard sails,
Licking their lips in a slow apprehension —
And I know not why I wept —

ESCAPE FROM TRADITIONALISM

By KENNEDY WILLIAMSON

Critics have adversely described my work as traditional, and I am making an honest attempt to correct this grievous fault by escaping from tradition.

(1) Hitherto rhyme has generally occurred at the end of the line, and an obvious way of cutting the conventional entanglements would be to introduce rhyme elsewhere. It is most important also in modern poetry that the title shall have no manner of connection with anything that follows. The delicacy of this poem, therefore, will be appreciated.

THE LODGER'S BOOTS

Hell &
Destruction! I can't underst&
Why things are pl&,
On the one h& to foster
Quite bl&ly
Contrab& traffic,
And on the other dem&
That I plough up the s& like a
Mariner str&ed for years on the coast
Of a lunatic l&.
Of course, it is gr& that Britain's
Exports should exp& but I think
The particular br& of wombat we buy
Should be b&.

(2) Tradition favours correct rhymes; but modern verse prefers eye-rhymes, near rhymes, false rhymes, and rhymes that do violence to pronunciations. In a sincere attempt to be non-traditional in these ways I have produced this little daintiness:

LIPSTICK ON THE LAPIS-LAZULI

On darling Phyllis I
Bestowed a gift of peaches.
She wolfed them, and O my,
How sheaches!

With terror in her soul
She lies in great agOny
(This is no hyperbole!)
On the balcOny.

Alas, there is no hope.
She's going home.
Syncope
Will end her brief life's epitome.

(3) Poets of the traditional school contrive to meet the demands of technique, and yet do no violence to grammar, syntax, the graciousness of English, and the inevitableness of phrasing. Contemporary opinion,

however, regards such adherences as ignoble constraints on freedom of expression. Modern poets will recognize their own idiom in the following:

SUNRISE ON THE BROKEN EGGSHELLS

In the pan's flash
I went to make repent,
To wear sackcloth and ash.
You also should have went.

Beneath hope's star
Lies all of hers and his.
All real contentment are;
All blisses is.

You based life's song
On an inverted pyramid,
But you were wrong,
You oughtn't to have did.

Equivocal you were, two-faced
In all your love.
What paramours you have embraced!
You shouldn't uv.

Having thus kicked off the gyves of stereotyped form, I can now claim to be in the vanguard of the new age of thinkers, one of the standard-bearers of the dawn . . . (sorry!) . . . Dawn.

CREATIVE EVOLUTION

EVE WILSON

GOD, in a happy mood,
Created birds; and found it good.
Improving on reptilian flight,
His first essay,
He raised the feathered creatures,
Small and shy,
From earth into the sky,
And near at hand
He watched with all delight
Their supple, singing flight.

Stretching a finger to stroke a wing,
He smiled with joy
And thought, "It was a happy thing
To make a bird, and watch it fly."
And with his other hand,
Protectingly,
He swept the giant reptiles from the sky.

NO STRANGE LAND

EVE WILSON

I have passed this way before
The country is familiar
Each significant landmark
Each signpost
Well remembered.

I am no stranger here
In this oppressive land,
Do not then pity me
The stony ground is easy
To my feet.

I can retread again
These precipitous pathways,
I need no guiding hand
To stay
My wary steps.

I have carried the same burden,
It can be borne again.
Less heavy now
Familiarity
Brings resignation.

I have tasted these same waters,
This sharp fruit still bitter
On my tongue,
I have become accustomed
To the ways of grief.

I have suffered this same anguish,
My heart is still as laden,
The loneliness as deep:
Only that now
I know the way —
I have been here before.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

A. V. STUART

Pause, little foot, on the turret stair,
In the dark angle, the sunless gloom,
The dank air that chills like a tomb.
Whither so hasty, so unaware?
Pause, little foot, on the turret stair.

Look from the window slit, O laughing
Face of a child, at the green parterre,
Lawns and rosebeds and pleachèd alleys,
The palace gardens spread out so fair,
Basking in sunlight, safe, sequestered.
Lean; look your last upon all things there.

Eager childhood, adventurous childhood,
Climb up the corkscrew turn of the stair,
With flushed face and with hammering heart-beat,
But with silken skirts held high in the air,
Eager childhood, adventurous childhood,
Climb up the corkscrew turn of the stair.

Up, and up, and up through the darkness,
Shot with sunlight, and dark once more.
Up, till the sunny curls are dishevelled,
And the bright shoes grimed with dust of the floor.
Up, counting steps and breathing sharply,
Seventy, eighty, ninety, a hundred:
On the hundredth step, a great grim door.

Whirr! Whirr!
Whirr! Whirr!
A steady rhythm, a strange vibration,
Comes from behind the nail-studded door.

Pause, little princess, pause and hearken,
You never heard sound like that before.
Whirr! Whirr!
Whirr! Whirr!
Steady and soothing, steady, relentless,
The rhythm of life, of the wheel's soft purr,

The flying foot that beats on the treadle,
The humming band whirling o'er and o'er.
Pause, little princess, pause and hearken.
You never heard sound like that before.

She draws in her breath: she opens the door.
An eldritch crone in a gabled corner
Sits murmuring runes and plying her wheel.
"Come, my pretty one. Come, sweet pigeon.
Gammer won't hurt ye. Come, see and feel.
Try your pretty young hands at the spinning.
I warrant ye'll soon learn the knack of the wheel."

She poises for flight; she pauses; then slowly
Tiptoes up to the ancient crone.
Caught by the soothing and ceaseless rhythm,
The rhythm of life in the wheel's soft drone,
The pulse of life in the flying footfall,
Drawn to her Fate, all unbeknown,
Drawn to her Fate, that sits there spinning,
Spinning and crooning, an ancient crone.

A shriek! her finger has touched the spindle,
A bead of blood on the rosy tip.
Down drops the Princess, pale and swooning,
Pale as curd, to the floor she slips.
The steady rhythm falters and trips,
The pulse of life in the flying footfall
Hovers and halts, and the wheel's soft hum
Slackens, and hushes, and settles dumb.

Still as death in the turret chamber,
Silent the wheel, and the eldritch crone
Fled to her realms of ancient magic,
Pleased with her spell, while the Princess, prone,
Lies like marble, a Sleeping Beauty,
Her golden hair spread out on the stone.

So they found her, and so they laid her,
Till the hundred years brought the prince to his own.

Editorial Note: The above poem was given "the highest honourable mention" by the adjudicator of the Greenwood Prize Competition, 1953.

TO A BABY

MICHAEL THOMAS

Life into life,
into bewilderment,
and these first peaceful unremembered days.
Life that was love, and still is loving
whether by love or accident or lust
the end is living.

Now, for a while the moon's eclipsed
but soon it will be clear.
The night is dark
but soon it will be light.
We shall still live,
and newborn children sleep
towards the day that in our minds
each night anticipates.
We move or feel we move
towards the warmth of distant lights,
one generation nearer love
as flocks of birds fly in the darkness south.
We are no wiser now than in our cradled days
and yet it is ourselves who move
by our own wills as well as by the driving
of all the powers we pray to understand.
We are no wiser, only knowing
when there is love, the loveliness of living.
When there is love.

CAN WE HELP YOU?

The answer is Yes to any Member who is anxious for the best advice about his or her work. The Poetry Society established a CRITICAL SERVICE some years ago, and writers are invited to make use of it.

Two poems may be submitted for criticism and help, for a minimum fee of 5s. The Charge for the criticism of each additional poem (under 100 lines) is 2s. It is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed and that a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed.

GEORGE BARKER: DEEP OR DRUMLIE?

By VERNON SCANNELL

If the quantity of critical attention focused on the work of a writer be a fair indication of his importance it may reasonably be claimed that George Barker is one of the leading English poets of his generation. But there is little unanimity in the findings of his critics and, with the late Dylan Thomas, he has had the misfortune to be stigmatized by one school for not toeing their party line, and kidnapped by a more anarchic group to be used as a kind of mascot.

He has been attacked with venom and inconsistency by Geoffrey Grigson, breathlessly eulogized by Paul Potts, and more cautiously by Francis Scarfe; then dismissed with a whimsical shrug by Sir Herbert Grierson, who, secure on the platform of non-comprehension, asks whether Barker's work is "not so much deep as drumlie?" W. B. Yeats recorded his admiration for the earlier poems in a letter to Dorothy Wellesley and the conservative Golden Treasury endowed him with its precarious immortality.

His first important book, *Calamiterror*, was a long ambitious poem strikingly free from the pervading influences of the period in which it was written. The influences, other than the potent one of Hopkins, and the less obtrusive one of Eliot, are philosophical rather than technical. There is much imperfectly assimilated and tenuously reconciled Rilke and Blake, yet the whole thing conveys an impression of independent power, sincerity and virtuosity. It has many faults. Frequently the energy and passion degenerate into confusion, when with the tortured violence of his language and imagery and a plethora of expletives he attempts to bludgeon the reader into uncritical submission. His naturally sensitive ear sustains his rhythms, though he does not escape the monotony that his selection of form makes it difficult to avoid. But he amply fulfils W. H. Auden's demand that a young poet should be above all interested in words, though an incomplete understanding of the ends to which such devices as alliteration and assonance are the means seduces him into solecizms and quite often justifies charges of vulgarity.

His next book, *Lament and Triumph*, a more or less heterogeneous collection, shows small advance beyond a slight increase of verbal discrimination and control, but *Eros in Dogma* does reveal evidence of an increasing comprehension of the ends of technique and of the necessity of a stricter discipline.

In *Eros in Dogma* he is most successful when least ambitious. There are some delightful love poems, and the six sonnets in which he praises certain friends and relatives are, with the exception of the one dedicated

to Stephen Spender, admirably executed and quite free from embarrassing histrionics.

Perhaps the most striking fault, a fault which might have been excused in his less mature work, is his uncritical selection of language and imagery, his carelessness. So many of the poems in *Eros in Dogma* which might otherwise have been very impressive are marred by banal or slipshod phrases or the introduction of the irrelevantly grotesque, and the reader is shocked, not into a heightened awareness of the poet's intention, but rather in the way that he would be shocked to see a classical ballerina suddenly turn a cartwheel. In Sonnet XIV a good poem is spoilt by this imitation of one of Auden's less admirable idiosyncracies, the frayed wisecrack of the thirties:

> Or in a white villa on the expensive blue shore
> Among the disgustingly rich . . .

Yet despite the causes for these objections *Eros in Dogma* contains some of the best poetry written during the war years, and the faults — the inability to escape from the mesmeric influence of heavy latinized words and his insurgent passion — are in a sense good faults because they indicate qualities which, under rigid discipline, make for poetry of a high order. We know that snaffles and curbs can be manufactured and that horses can't, and George Barker has proved in *Eros in Dogma* that his horse is a very lively one and of good ancestry.

Six years later *News of the World* appeared. It contains thirty-four poems of varying merit and intention. It is at once apparent that Barker has refined his taste in language and become more acutely aware of the relation between form and content. With this increase in formal control Barker's influences become more obvious. His epigrams and epitaphs are direct imitations of those of Blake and in "The Five Faces of Pity" much of the pictorial imagery is strongly reminiscent of Blake's drawings and paintings:

> War, the unbearable beast in the sky, effaces
> These effigies of pity that rise up on a cloud:
> The living and the dying hide their faces.

That he has digested what, in his other books, seems to be an excessive diet of Hopkins is proved in the brilliant sonnet to Baudelaire, while the poem, "To My Son", evinces strong affinities with the metaphysicals, an influence difficult to find in his earlier work. This is a beautifully controlled poem which, despite the strict metrical uniformity and short line, never becomes pedestrian and is illumined by vivid and apposite imagery and purity of reason and diction. He can still be amazingly careless, and in the sonnet on Ireland he prints a pun so atrocious that I wouldn't dare to produce it in my local on a Saturday night: "That was an Eire ago."

Yet there can be no doubt that *News of the World* contains more good

poetry than any of his previous books, and the chastening of expression has been accompanied by a deepening and clarifying of logical thought.

His most recent collection, *A Vision of Beasts and Gods*,* is disappointing in that it shows no sign of real development since the appearance of *News of the World*. The faults of slapdash writing and the use of too hectically coloured language are as apparent as ever. The failure to see what is bad in his own poetry has here been extended to allow an entire poem, "Epitaph For Many Young Men", to be printed, a poem which I am sure proceeded from no centre of creative compulsion and is not even a well-performed exercise. The second stanza shows an almost staggering mishandling of the pathetic fallacy:

> And yet the fish in a small river near Reading
> Will sometimes look up and wonder
> Why his dark sad face no longer leans over them
> And smiles as the float bobs under.

There are, however, some fine poems in this collection such as "Stanzas On A Visit To Longleat House", "Channel Crossing", and the exquisite audacious "On A Friend's Escape From Drowning", where a tight-rope stretched over a pit of sentimentality is walked with complete assurance and triumph. "At The Wake Of Dylan Thomas" is a magnificent poem in which the profusion of images is welded firmly together by passion and intelligence; indeed this elegy is so much of a unity that partial quotation could not convey anything of its quality.

It might seem unreasonable to complain of a feeling of disappointment over a book that contains so much good poetry and two or three poems the success of which binds the critical tongue, but the feeling persists, and not without reason. For about the collection as a whole there hangs an air of tiredness, an absence of vitality that is oddly increased by the almost frenzied diction of some of the poems. Too often one feels that Barker is repeating himself without adding anything in the way of manner or matter

He is facing the problem which confronts every poet of stature at some stage in his development, the problem of finding a way to widen and deepen his vision and construct an appropriate form and universally significant pattern of symbols in which to clothe that vision:

> Because one has learnt to get the better of words
> For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which
> One is no longer disposed to say it.

With greater care and concentration and more restraint he should before long write a poem that will endure for as long as poetry itself endures, for he possesses the poetic faculties and a sense of self-dedication in greater measure than any other poet of his generation.

* A Vision of Beasts and Gods, by George Barker, (Faber 9s. 6d.)

THE OWL

E. B. W. CHAPPELOW

Tuwhitt, tuwhoo, tuwhitt, tuwhoo;
It is the owl that calls to you.

I am the owl that hates the sun
And blinks and broods in the light of the moon;
In the forked branch of a hollow tree
I brood and blink and under me
In the standing corn the field-mice grey
Frisk and turn and scurry and play,
And I watch and watch and then sudden swoop
And with claw and hooked beak rip them up.
I browse and blink with half-shut eyes
And because I look solemn men think me wise.
Wise was I once in those Attic days
When goddess Athene had all men's praise,
And I, her bird, unruffled and staid,
Sat on the shoulder of God's own Maid,
And her gilded helm in the summer weather
Shone in the sun and we two together
Were pictured on the lovely, fine
Athenian drachmas, both divine,
Bird and goddess; but her ye drave,
Cursed mortals, to the timeless grave,
And sullied her temples with strange, sad rites,
And your savage priests and your eremites,
Ragged and matted, pulled down her chaste
Beauty of marble and laid it waste.*
So I from my former high estate,
The tawny owl, have fallen and fate
Confines me now to the hollow tree
Where I browse and brood, discrowned but free.
My wisdom has left me and now I sit
With my eerie, lonely *tu-whoo, tuwhitt,*
To make your flesh in the dead of night
Creep with a sudden uncanny fright.
But most I love from an ivied tower
To hoot o'er a graveyard hour on hour,
And haunt you, though you still draw breath,
With the shuddering thought of oncoming death.
Tuwhitt, tuwhoo, tuwhitt, tuwhoo;
It is the owl that calls to you.

* Though not the Parthenon.

MERSEYSIDE

ELSIE M. BANISTER

I shall not find it where grey stone
  Piles high to meet the clouds of grey,
And warehouse-windows gasp alone
  At belching smoke through the busy day:

I shall not find it where the docks
  Open their gates to giant ships
Laden with merchandise and stocks
  Of frozen meat for hungry lips:

I shall not find it where the crane
  Swings wide above congested quays,
Where sweating men reload again
  The ships for ports across the seas:

I shall not find it where the stores
  The latest fashion-modes display,
And eager women throng their doors
  In multicoloured garments gay . . .

But when night comes and moonlight gleams
  To fuse all things with silver glow,
Awakening countless childhood dreams, —
  Sand-castles, paddling, long ago . . .

When pebbles with the surging tide
  Murmur and turn and sigh, and when
The lights shine forth on Merseyside,
  Ah, I shall find it then.

(A complimentary gesture to Dr. Leigh V. Henry, and mutual association with Merseyside: Summer 1954).

A LITTLE BOY

ANTHONY EDKINS

A little boy, with scurrying feet, ran along
One of the long wide streets which stretch
In Stockwell, Brixton and in Kennington.
A little boy, with eager lips,
The wind's hand on his head.
'It's nice to be me,' the little boy said.

STREET SCENE

BARBARA BINGLEY

The gutters glisten, and a yellow lamp
Leers through the gathering dusk as day, grown old,
Makes her unlovely exit: now the damp
Cobbles sweat, and darkened doorways hold
Unsavoury shadows; here the children play
Between the cabbalistic signs in chalk
Scrawled on the pavement of the alley way.
Hopscotch, and back and forth, boots scrape, shrill talk —
Incomprehensible to older ears —
Yatters in squabble, screech, and shrill dispute,
When suddenly a laden cart appears
Caught in an amber nimbus from the flare
Fan-shaped and flickering on the frosty air,
And up between the houses clangs the cry
Of: "Toffee Apples, two a penny, try
My toffee apples! . . ."
Briefly silenced, mute,
The children gaze, and then their voices ring
Redouble, and the red-cheeked rabble surge
About the hairy pony whose warm hide
Fumes in the cold. First come the rich who bring
Pence glued to palm, whilst lagging far behind
The poor suck loud a consolatory thumb,
Or turn their pockets inside out to find
Unprofitable treasure, bullseye, mouldy crumb,
Or coloured marbles, Alley Tor, and Pride . . .
The gipsy hawker grins, glib-tongued to urge
His wares on eager custom, gives to each
Their lawful pennyworth of honeyed bliss,
Filling the small chapped hands stretched up to reach
This humble harvest of Hesperides.

O never fruit so magical as this
Grew upon Eden's tree: no apples sung
By poets tasted half so sweet as these
Green pippins cased mellifluously in gold,
That slowly melt beneath a child's pink tongue
Curling in ecstasy to catch and hold
Each dulcet drop.
What epicure could find

A harmony of sweet and sour more bland
Than these crisp windfalls in their lucent rind?
Speared on peeled wands as white as ivory
They pass hospitably from hand to hand
With grave, untutored, lovely courtesy.
A pennyworth of pleasure so complete
That its perfection makes the heart stand still
And speaks a prophecy of paradise.

The cart moves on, and up the narrow street
The fog comes fingering. A tenuous chill
Creeps round the small and thinly clad; intent,
Oblivious of the cold, their merchandise
Is shared together in profound content.

Love-feast of ragged innocence whose grace
Strangely adorns this poor, uncomely place.

THE WARNING

HERBERT BLUEN

In the dark wood
No creature stirred,
Never a sound
Of beast or bird,
And joy was an unuttered word.

Then, swooping low,
A jet plane screamed
Warning to men
Still unredeemed;
I woke as one who long has dreamed.

Silence splintered
Like precious glass;
I saw the ghosts
Of armies pass,
And joy lay trampled in the grass.

"DEAR EDITORS—"

(The opinions expressed in the following Letters from Readers are not necessarily those of *The Poetry Review.*)

"THE WHITE MARES"

It is strange how to one person a symbolism is clear, and to another confused. Mr. Knox, in his criticism of the ballad, to which he gave the Oriole Prize, suspects that "The White Mares" presented some meaning that eluded him. I think so too, and it is a testimony to the poem, that nevertheless it won the prize.

Is it astonishing that truth and beauty in any form create either hatred or alarm in most of us — sometimes from the mere frustration of these things we seek in ourselves? Could the Mothers of the slaughtered children of Bethlehem have been overjoyed at the birth of Jesus, when the direct result of his birth was the massacre of their own children? The "sword" later prophesied by Jesus didn't take long to fall, so sure it seems to be that it is "the bright day that bringeth forth the adder".

OLIVE RIVERS

PROTEST

I feel a protest must be made against the really revolting "portrait-drawing" of Dylan Thomas published in the current issue of *The Poetry Review.* So far as I know — and I have taken the *Review* for over twenty years — this is the first time a page has been given to a picture of any kind, and now — *what* a picture. Surely it is misnamed, and what Michael Ayrton has really drawn is a sketch for Caliban in some new production of *The Tempest?* Most of the recent pictures of Dylan Thomas are revolting, of course, but this is quite indescribably horrible.

We know we live in the Dark Ages, but is it not time someone called a halt to the almost ceaseless stream of horrors, so many going by the name of "art"? Or is the will to death so powerful that our civilization really wishes to disappear in the pit of annihilation? The contemporary taste in "art" in all its various forms does indeed seem to suggest it, and it is obvious to some people that the general acceptance of revolting pictures, poems and so on is tragically symptomatic.

DALLAS KENMARE

"FOR POETRY'S SAKE"

Superstitions die hard. The nineties of last century produced one (probably itself a revival) which shows signs of being given a new lease by those wild young dogs who find it easier to empty pint-pots than to

subdue their fine frenzies to the ordered ritual of art. Because Swinburne was rescued from drink and Rossetti succumbed to chloral, because passions of a peculiar kind drove Verlaine to jail and Baudelaire to his brain's extinction, it is gravely concluded in some quarters that no one can produce poetry unless he be a fool in his private affairs and a flouter of those decencies which the less gifted hold dear.

In a day when all established ideas are in the melting-pot we may readily admit that current morality is a code of mutual convenience to which we bow either from a sense of our duty to others or as the readiest way of ensuring our own immunity from the reprisals of those whom we should otherwise offend. But the highest *morale* may indeed be shown by those who offend the ruling code, by those who pursue beauty disinterestedly and unpersuaded by the crowding shadows of reproach or applause. But those who claim that poetry should be valued for poetry's sake — a truism that no real critic can dispute — are apt to go a step further, and far from maintaining the irrelevance of the artist's morality, will positively cite his irregularities in proof of his genius, or call his sobriety to witness for his lack of it.

The Victorians looked for a moral message from their poets, and lives in consonance with the evangel they brought; if we, on the other hand, proclaim "poetry for poetry's sake", let us at least keep to our motto, not supposing that a poet is either made by his excesses or marred by his avoidance of them, but by that very intoxication of beauty which may just as well be served by austerity as by indulgence. A fine sensibility may in fact be fostered by those who refuse to coarsen the palate by excess, and a poet is not less a poet for recognizing that excesses may hinder his chances of favour with the Muse that wears "a robe of sackcloth next the smooth white skin."

A READER

e. e. cummings

I leap to defend the originality of technique of this American poet. Some years ago I read a few lines of his verse in a review, and have since been haunted by their melody:

> Anyone lived in a pretty how town
> (with up so floating many bells down)
> spring summer autumn winter
> he sang his didn't he danced his did.

It was in the Penguin Book of Modern American Verse that I read the further adventures of Anyone. This anthology includes other poems by Mr. Cummings, including "somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond," with the enchanting lines:

> the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses,
> nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands.

It is interesting to compare this last line with one by Gerard Manley Hopkins:

"The moon, dwindled and thinned to the fringe
of a fingernail held to the candle."

Hopkins, the greater poet, uses a more accurate image, but Cummings presents a pleasing picture to the mind's eye. Mr. Cummings's verse emphasizes what readers of American comics already know, namely, modern American is a distinct language, not just another English dialect like Cockney or Yorkshire.

WINIFRED SMITH

QUESTIONS TO MR. WILLIAMSON

In a recent number of the *Review* Mr. Kennedy Williamson has a very interesting article on sense-transference as a clue to modern poetry. It is convincing in its explanation of the principle that experience in one of the five senses may be rendered in terms of another. But what the ordinary man — even perhaps an ordinary poet — finds difficult to accept is the apparent unreason of many of the examples. "White noise" is, I suppose, intended to be a sense-transfer from white heat, but would not most people think of white in terms of purity, repentance (white sheet) or fear? And Mr. Williamson's justification of Edith Sitwell's reference to a "bone that bellows white" seems lame to me.

A further point; Mr. Williamson says that "poetry must be compressed, allusive and economical, and hence some of its obscurity." The generalization seems sweeping. Admittedly the modern craze for imagery, too often of the kind that C. Day Lewis calls "graven images", makes compression and allusion inevitable if tedium is to be avoided; but if the statement were true, it would rule out from the category of poetry probably more than ninety per cent of all that has been written from the time of Homer onwards, until it was discovered that obscurity was the easiest way to be original, especially if you were not allowed to regard poetry as a suitable vehicle for serious thought.

(Sir) PATRICK LAIRD

LET'S LAUGH

"A good love-poem . . . is prose." — T. S. Eliot.

Poet, whose "plaintive number" flows
To find a woman's heart, beware
How much to others you disclose:
There are eavesdroppers everywhere!

Wherefore, to speak of cream or rose,
Do I, abjuring verse, my dear,
Whisper the catalogue in prose . . .
— Lest Mr. Eliot overhear.

MALCOLM H. TATTERSALL

PORTMAN SQUARE—END PAPERS

Looking back to May is a long stretch — such are the penalties of quarterly publication. Talks and plays linger in the memory, particularly the work of Charles Doran's excellent team. There was Choral Speaking and some good individual reading by John Holgate's group from the Guildhall School of Music. Margaret Rawlings chose her selection by consultation on the spot with something gained for spoken poetry in the hearthside atmosphere so created. Alun Llewellyn brushed aside the Celtic mists to reveal the weaving of Welsh tradition from its sophisticated Latin origins; most interesting and the threads firmly traced. Martin Starkie, quicksilver: the best Dylan Thomas was heard to date, barring only the dead voice itself. Audience Night was packed out; some reading their favourites, some their own — and who are we to enquire if these were sometimes one and the same. One very young gentleman under protection from the Chair (Tom Foley), essayed a little mild fun at our expense, the refrain being "My God! My Muse!" . . . or was it Mews?

We have been happy to welcome this season, new voices and fresh faces, and from what we hear of forthcoming events, our younger brothers in poetry are going to have a good look in, and you a good look at them, in the autumn.

K.V.R.

AUTUMN EVENINGS AT PORTMAN SQUARE

"*The Battle for Beauty is Never Finally Won*"

Here is a list of Programmes for September to December, Friday evenings, 6-30 to 7-30 at 33 Portman Square. Members 1s. Non-Members 2s. (Members, bring a Non-Member!).

September	24	"Mid-Century Poets in Person." Dannie Abse, Thomas Blackburn, Elizabeth Jennings, James Kirkup, John Smith. Chairman, the President, Thomas Moult. (Arranged by Robert Armstrong).
October	1	"The Poet's Use of Words." Lecture by F. Pratt Green. Chairman, Kathleen V. Richardson.
	8	"Grave and Gay." A programme arranged and read by Esmé and Vera Beringer.
	15	Audience Night. Members are invited to read their own or their favourite poem (limit, three minutes). Chairman, Tom Foley.
	22	Request Play Night. "A Florentine Tragedy," by Oscar Wilde. (Arranged by Charles Doran).
	29	"A Reading of Modern Poetry," with Pamela Barnard and David Holmes.
November	5	"Treasures Old and New," with Keltie McLeod and Wilton Cole.
	12	"Burns into English," by William Kean Seymour.
	19	"Our Silver Medallists." Mary Ashall, Inez Battenbury, Pamela Coursie, Margaret Hodgetts, Wendy Jubb, N. De Liebhaber-Robson. (Arranged by Mary Giles).
	26	"Was Lord Oxford Shakespeare?" by T. L. Adamson. Questions invited after the Lecture.
December	3	"The Women in Shakespeare." Dramatic Recital by Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies. Personal Appeaarnce of a Distinguished Actress. Chairman, the President.
	10	"The Invisible Ballet." Poetic Prose-Play.
	17	Audience Night. Members are again invited to read their own or their favourite poem (limit three minutes).

Book Reviews . . .

POETRY AND ABOUT POETRY

By STEPHEN GRAHAM

A Few Late Chrysanthemums, by John Betjeman (John Murray, 9s 6d.).
The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry, by R. S. Crane (Toronto University Press — London, Geoffrey Cumberlege, 45s.).

John Betjeman is representative of his time, though not modernistic. He is straightforward, pleasant, impressionistic and a child at school could like most of his verse. He employs no outrageous similes or obscure words and his writing is in the main quietly descriptive, coloured, clever, with the occasional use of a gentle literary alchemy in phrase-making. as in the line, "the constant click and kissing of the trolley buses hissing" or in

> And marbled clouds go scudding by
> The many-steepled London sky.

or in

> While she in arc-lit Oxford Street adrift
> Soared through the sales by safe hydraulic lift.

This quality which gives emotional pleasure while reading is not exclusively poetic and could very well inform the pens of prose writers, even of journalists. Writing to-day is all too drab and baldly informative, leaving the imagination of the reader or radio-listener unstirred. The mind is not merely a blackboard; it is more like a cinema screen asking technicolour and sound.

One of the best poems in *A Few Late Chrysanthemums* is "Essex", with the verses:

> Then deepest Essex few explore
> Where steepest thatch is sunk in flowers
> And out of elm and sycamore
> Rise flinty fifteenth-century towers.
>
> I see the little branch line go
> By white farms roofed in red and brown,
> The old Great Eastern winding slow
> To some forgotten country town.

But there are some macabre and witty pages in this small volume, and they are also characteristic of John Betjeman, such as the not easily forgotten

> Dr. Ramsden cannot read *The Times* obituary to-day,
> He's dead.
> Let monographs on silk worms by other people be
> Thrown away

Unread
For he who best could understand and criticize them, he
Lies clay
In bed.

If you have a table for modern verse and autumn flowers, *A Few Late Chrysanthemums* has its place.

But turning from poetry to Prof. Crane's lectures on poetry, one is somewhat bewildered. How would Betjeman fare if analysed by the professor? One thing seems pretty certain. No matter whether the comment were positive or adverse, few people would understand what the professor wrote. Crane goes in for encumbered sentences running sometimes to hundreds of lines, and the students of Toronto must have been unusually brilliant if they could understand these essays when they were given as lectures. I find something of what I wrote about Betjeman's verse hidden in the following characteristic lines of R. S. Crane:

> It has been discovered by different critics, that the words of poetry differ from those of plain prose or scientific statement by being primarily emotive or evocative of attitudes and feelings rather than directly referential, that the essence of poetic speech is not clarity but ambiguity, in William Empson's sense of 'any verbal nuance, however slight, which gives room for alternative reactions to the same piece of language'; that the symbols of poetry, unlike those of discursive prose, are untranslatable, the meanings being bound to the particular symbolic forms the poet has chosen; that this form has a value in itself over and above its signative function, so that the expressions in poetry tend to be 'opaque' rather than transparent; that the statements of poetry aim at a synthetic unity achieved by fusing together or reconciling disparate or discordant elements of meaning . . .

and so on for another 120 words before we come to a full stop! Some of this seems to have as much to do with poetry as an undertaker has to do with love. The learned professor may have something to say, but he has yet to learn to write.

Success in writing comes by art, not chance.
As those move easier who have *learned* to dance.

One of the first things a man has to learn is how to write clearly. There is a school book on the subject. It used to cost eighteen pence.

ORIOLE PRIZE 1954/55

ORIOLE (the Poets' Group of the Poetry Society) offers an award of £5 for the best Mystical Poem received. This should be unpublished, and should not exceed twenty-eight lines. The competition is open to all; entrance fee 2s. 6d. per entry. The adjudicators reserve the right to divide the prize or to withhold it if no entry is of sufficient merit. Competitors must adopt a pseudonym which should appear in block capitals both on the manuscript and on a sealed envelope containing the entrant's name and address. MSS. will not be returned. The winning poem will be published in *Poetry Review*. Closing date, 31st July, 1955. Address: Oriole Prize, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, W.1.

ALL MY SENSES

By F. PRATT GREEN

Mine the Harvest, by Edna St. Vincent Millay (Hamish Hamilton, 12s. 6d.).

Selected Poems, by Walter de la Mare (Faber, 7s. 6d.).

The Holy Stone, by Thomas Blackburn (Hand & Flower Press, 4s. 6d.).

The death of Edna St. Vincent Millay, four years ago, robbed American literature of a genuine poet and a remarkable personality. Born in Maine in 1892, she published many volumes of poetry, much of it having a tender lyricism and a clarity which won her a wide public, some of it, notably her sonnets, wringing praise for its skill even from critics who complained that success had hindered her development. *Mine the Harvest* is a collection, edited by her sister, of earlier poems hitherto unpublished and of later work she was preparing for the press. It confirms the impression that she was at her best in the lyric and sonnet, rather than in her more diffuse poems. Across the characteristic liveliness of her spirit, her savouring of life, falls a shadow that had always given depth to her vision:

> I view the lovely segments of a past
> I lived with all my senses, well aware
> That this is perfect, and it would not last.

The sextet of another sonnet, worthy to stand with her finest, suggests her quality as a poet. The theme is autumn:

> Then sits the insistent cricket in the grass;
> But on the gravel crawls the chilly bee;
> And all is over that could come to pass
> Last year; excepting this: the mind is free
> One moment, to compute, refute, amass,
> Catalogue, question, contemplate, and see.

Walter de la Mare, though older by nearly twenty years than Miss Millay, is happily with us, and still using not only "all his senses" but also that indefinable sense with which he explores another dimension. His *Selected Poems*, admirably displaying the different facets of his genius, and published at a remarkably low price, confirms us in our belief that he will be counted among the immortals. It makes nonsense of a recent criticism, voiced in an anthology that does him scant justice, that de la Mare is "inhibited by artificial conventions and imagery". If you don't like moonlight, blame yourself, not the moon!

Thomas Blackburn has something in common with Walter de la Mare. Both create their own world, dreamlike and yet intensely imagined;

both have as their chief themes love and death; both are haunted by memories of childhood, and converse with ghosts; both transmit to us in one experience terror and delight. But instead of the distilled emotion, the grave and delicate restraint, of de la Mare, Blackburn releases upon us his profound disturbances in poetry that borders sometimes on violence. He does not give us, in the manner of some younger poets, sophisticated commentaries on his emotional processes, but the thing itself. This means that whatever may be his limitations of theme, or defects of style, Blackburn is a poet of very great promise.

The Holy Stone is technically more assured, and is more varied, than his earlier pamphlet, *The Outer Darkness*. It reveals Blackburn in the act of creating a personal mythology. Adam Aramain has arrived, to baffle, haunt, and illuminate us:

> Adam Aramain, that most divided man,
> Both murderer and child,
> Must roll in the bitter grass
> And beat his head on a stone
> Until the light comes down,
> Say the larches under the moon.
> Both child and man are the same,
> Hydra, have pity on
> Your forked divided flame.

The book also contains two short dramas on Aramain themes. They give us cause to hope Blackburn will make fuller use of his dramatic gift. The only stage he needs is in the minds of his readers, and may they be very many.

THREE EMERGING

By KATHLEEN VALMAI RICHARDSON

The Dark Is Light Enough, by Christopher Fry (Geoffrey Cumberlege Oxford University Press, 8s. 6d.).

The Splendid Burden, by Margaret Stanley-Wrench (Edinburgh House Press, 3s. 6d.).

The Winged Avengers, by David Bulwer Lutyens (Harvill Press, 7s. 6d.).

I have heard it argued recently that the verse play, by reason of its having just a shade more chance of reaching the limelight, has become the modern substitute for the sustained narrative poem. Perhaps this is not the moment to pursue the truth of that theory. Nevertheless, in this strange world where poetry *per se* has become a popular whipping boy and prose, chopped into poetry's semblance, a respected mummer, we

may observe odd happenings. While Poeta is looking round for the loan of a bowler hat, entirely prosaic persons snatch up his leafy crown and try to force it hard down upon their workaday skulls. Meanwhile, the bard, appalled at the squabbishness of modern poetic headgear, will tie around it a ribbon stuck with a drooping rose, thinking himself more artistic that way. Better had he tried the Chaplin angle.

Changing methods account for so many verse dramas falling between two stools and ending as neither play nor verse.

Of course, Mr. Fry's play *The Dark Is Light Enough* commits no such *bêtise*. The text comes to us enjoying many advantages. It is by a practised hand; it has already reached the London stage, and within its covers lurks the echo of Dame Edith Evans's voice. Any dramatist who offers soil for such a flower earns our gratitude.

Those who have not yet seen the production may be grateful too for the immediate perception that from the first page, this is a real *play*. We are caught up at once into a situation rather than trapped into overhearing a dissertation. The dialogue, biggest bogey for the metrical writer, leaps easily from mouth to mouth; never stodgy, always pushing the situation towards the crux. Christopher Fry preserves his felicity of language, and his wit has lost nothing by discarding that jewellery which, while it dazzled, was apt to clog the action in his earlier plays.

Margaret Stanley-Wrench comes towards the stage almost apologetically. Simple backcloths, few props, 'doubling' and even a suggested partition of the play itself (each 'act' forms a short integral play). This modest approach is practical since the price also puts this interesting piece of work within the reach of those small non-commercial groups which are the chief hope of the poet-playwright. *The Splendid Burden* is the Cross, and the play deals with the Christian struggle from A.D.30 to the present dark of Africa (where most of the action is set). The poetry is honest and good. I commend this play to those who are bringing drama back into the church, from whence it grew.

David Bulwer Lutyens admits no mechanical impediment in *The Winged Avengers*. The overall conception is poetic, but the text proliferates with detailed and lengthy stage direction, minutiae of physical appearance, facial expression, and even of disguised sentiments underlying, interspersed with speech, cries and groans. This is stark Greek tragedy without chorus (the ever-present author provides this in parentheses). The tale is of Agamemnon's return to betrayal and death at Clytemnestra's hand.

Undoubtedly, one can form a grim and lurid picture from the printed page, but how much of this arises intrinsically from the dialogue, and how much from the more graphic narration in the margin, I would not care to impose upon future readers. I will content myself with distorting that wonderful title of Christopher Fry's: The Poetry Should be Enough.

SURFACE AND CENTRE

By GEOFFREY JOHNSON

A Correct Compassion, by James Kirkup (Oxford University Press, 8s. 6d.).

A Spring Journey, by James Kirkup (Oxford University Press, 8s. 6d.).

Has James Kirkup's recognition been too easy? Certainly in conception, performance, and metrics, he is often lax and loose. Much in both books is nimble perception from the outside, mere journalistic impressionism; this applies in particular to the poems about Leeds, Tynemouth and so on. Some of it is merely artificial intellectual contrivance, resulting in a Cowleyesque frigidity (for example, "Rhapsody on a Bead Curtain"). A few poems like "Dustbins" and "Stars Compared To Worms" are plain silly, the sillier because they are intended in dead seriousness. What this poet needs most is compression and omission, and a resolutely blind eye to certain barbarous stylistic tricks and assumptions momentarily in fashion — the ubiquitous rhyming of accented and unaccented syllables (trance, endurance), colloquialism at all costs, even in dignified contexts, and resulting in bathos like "How's she breathing, Doug?" and assonance as a rhyme-substitute, a device already staled by thousands of poetic pretenders.

Mr. Kirkup at his best has a fine imaginative sweep, and magic. The title poem of each collection is a definite achievement and well sustained. "A Correct Compassion", despite the unfortunate "Doug" above, is a really daring exploration and genuine acquisition of new poetic territory. Fine too are the love poems ("Presence and Absence", etc.) and Choric Stanzas; in fact, any poem in which he has really felt something, and in which emotion has melted off the usual circumstantial fuss and typographical detail, is fine. "On a Dead Child" is one of several. Neither in English verse, old or new, is there anything quite like "The Bowl of Gold Fish: A Fable", for subtle combination of delicate fantasy with profundity of symbol. Here, in "Chelsea Embankment", he is at his best, pure Whistler in nocturnal magic:—

> The river underneath the bridge
> Shone in the darkness like a lighted tank
> In which the lamps' reflections hung
> Their ripple-ragged blue and violent anemones,
> Snowberries, amber sea-chrysanthemums,
> One wounded star among steel-sequined fishes; and like long,
> Electric eels the silent traffic lazed from bank to bank . . .

And here, in "A Visit to Brontëland", as quite often, he is writing what is not even verse, that is in the redeeming sense of technical accomplishment, but prose, and pretty poor prose at that:—

The road climbs from the valley past the public
Park and turns, at the Haworth Co-operative Stores,
Into the grey stone village, and the steep
Street leading to the Parsonage, the Inn, the W.C.s;
To the Church of St. Michael and All Angels, high in trees . . .

Both books are impeccably produced.

TWO IMPORTANT REPRINTS

By E. D. BANGAY

Selected Poems of John Clare, Edited by James Reeves (Heinemann, 7s. 6d.)
Collected Poems. James Stephens (MacMillan, 15s.).

Mr. Reeves's foreword is a sensitive introduction to John Clare and his poetry, showing how his moods swung from ecstasy to despair. Though Clare's life was one of almost unmitigated toil and tragedy it is the joyful note that seems to dominate his poetry; his detailed descriptions of country sights and sounds begin with "I love . . . to see . . . to hear" over and over again. Re-reading him is a rewarding occupation, and we owe much to Mr. Reeves for bringing him forward with great selective care.

James Stephens also was a country-lover, but one who moved among and loved its people as well. He gave us endearing Irish humour, simplicity of phrase and line, and touches and turns of whimsicality and unexpectedness. A collected work enhances all these qualities. There are about a dozen new poems in the volume; we enjoy them all.

THEY MADE OR MARRED

By JOHN GRADDON

Contemporary Reviews of Romantic Poetry, Edited by John Wain (George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 10s. 6d.).

Some little time ago Peter Ustinov, proposing a toast to critics expressed a preference for destructive criticism, because, he said, constructive criticism was often impertinent. This book covers the period 1800–1830, when the great reviews and magazines flourished, and there was space enough for the critic to balance and compare, to make or attack a reputation, to take a scholarly view or to indulge in a personal feud.

And so they did, endlessly, and what entertaining reading it makes. Would they were living at this hour! How on earth would they live?

T. S. Eliot's play, *The Confidential Clerk*, has been published in book-form by Faber (10s. 6d.). But it hardly comes within the scope of our notice, even though the dialogue is chopped into lines that help it to look like poetry. Also four new volumes have appeared in the Everyman's Library, two of them comprising Dr. Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets* (Dent, 6s. each), the others being *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, selected and translated by Professor R. K. Gordon (6s.) and *Blake's Poems and Prophecies*, edited by the late Max Plowman (7s.). These are beautiful and most desirable books, although they cost six or seven times more than they would have done when the series was inaugurated nearly fifty years ago.

POETRY "DOWN UNDER"

By F. PRATT GREEN

Australian Poetry, 1953, edited by Nan McDonald (Angus & Robertson, 10s. 6d.).

This Night's Orbit, by Robert D. FitzGerald (Melbourne University Press, Cambridge University Press, 21s.).

How many of us, if challenged, could name half-a-dozen contemporary Australian poets? Or even the two whose reputations stand highest? If the poetry-reading public of Britain are ignorant on this subject, as I fear we are, we can at least excuse ourselves on the ground that Australian poetry is rarely in the bookshops and reviews of it are rarely in our literary periodicals.

It is therefore a particular pleasure to review these two books, one anthologizing a year's work in poetry, the other a book of verse, — to use his own term — by Robert D. FitzGerald, who shares with Kenneth Slessor the highest place in Australian esteem.

The anthology introduces us to nearly forty poets. The oldest generation is represented by Frederick T. Macartney and by Dame Mary Gilmore, born in 1865, greatly honoured in her own country, whose lyrics appeared in the original *Oxford Book of Australian Verse*, published in 1918. Poets of established reputation include W. Hart-Smith, Douglas Stewart, David Campbell, Rosemary Dobson, Francis Webb, Kenneth Mackenzie (his "Caesura" is an excellent choice), and Judith Wright. I turned to Judith Wright with special interest, remembering "Woman to Man", to me the most moving of Australian lyrics. Her "Gum-Trees Stripping" did not disappoint. This is a beautifully achieved poem, as its last stanza, even in isolation, suggests:

> Wisdom can see the red, the rose,
> the stained and sculptured curve of grey,
> the charcoal scars of fire, and see
> around that living tower of tree
> the hermit tatters of old bark
> split down and strip to end the season;
> and can be quiet and not look
> for reasons past the edge of reason.

There would seem to be no lack of competent younger poets, whose names are unfamiliar to me. I found much to my liking Nancy Keesing's well-contrived, amusing, vividly descriptive "Over Jittery Sydney", and Eric Irvin's skilful and charming "Boy with a Shell".

How does this anthology compare with its English equivalent, *New Poems, 1953?* Australian poetry is more of a piece, much less bedevilled

by movements, influences, fashions, and theories, and Australian poets are much less introverted. This makes for verse which is free from perversity, often evocative, sometimes contemplative, and rarely disturbing.

Robert D. FitzGerald should be better known here. He has been called, with some truth, the Auden of Australia. He has vigour, humour, sensitiveness to contemporary moods and events as well as a keen historical sense, and he has both lyrical and narrative skill, but he lacks Auden's precision of phrase and brilliance of image. A quotation — from "Fifth Day", an attractive poem about the trial of Warren Hastings — will make the difference clear:

> Something is eternal in the tugging of minds
> which is not in mountains or monuments maturing
> through day and darkness of centuries; something that binds
> life into tensions and balances enduring
> amid flowers withering and years flowering;
> whereby in the instant of contest men outlive
> upshots that melt in hot hands that achieve.

Comparisons between authors do more harm than good. So let us be content to say that FitzGerald should be read for his own poetry's sake, his personal style and slant, and his humanity. Accepting this book with gratitude, one nevertheless feels that his finest qualities are better displayed in his "Essay on Memory" (see H. M. Green's invaluable *Modern Australian Poetry*, revised edition, 1952), and in the excerpts from *Between Two Tides*, which Nan McDonald has chosen for her anthology.

THE FRANCISCAN SPIRIT

The Early White Narcissus, by Marjorie Baldwin (Guild Press, 2s. 6d.).

The desire of the author in publishing this slender book of verse is modest enough to be misleading. We need make no allowance: such writing can stand any ordinary test, especially the translations from the French of Francis Jammes, in which there is much to delight us if we have been moved in the recent past by the poet's appeal of James Stephens and Ralph Hodgson for earth's little creatures. "Prayer to be allowed to enter Paradise along with the Donkeys" is a poem which would warm our hearts even if we stopped at the title. There is, for Miss Baldwin, a religious unity, as though St. Francis were the inspiration, in all living, whether that of birds or animals, humble folk or flowers — the early white narcissus are "a flock of white doves, merely paused for flight". As long as her poetry shows the spirit we find in this little volume there will be readers to welcome it. T.M.

A thoughtful little prose commentary, *The Poets and the Animals*, by Charles A. Westacott (Letchworth, Herts., 3s. 6d.), covers several centuries, beginning with Robert Herrick and closing with John Clare and John Keats. The quotations that illustrate the pleasantly-written studies are admirably chosen. More definitely to be classed as anthologies are two booklets edited by Douglas Geary, one covering the *Poetry of the Sixteenth Century*, the other the *Poetry of the Seventeenth* (Stockwell, 2s. each). The editor explains that the booklets are intended as an elementary introduction to English verse, and they serve their purpose.

FROM PERSIA TO PARADISE

By ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Persian Poems, an Anthology Edited by A. J. Arberry (Dent, 6s.).
The Harmonious Vision, Studies in Milton's Poetry by Don Cameron Allen (Oxford University Press, 24s.).

Everyman's Library now includes an anthology of Persian poetry, lyric, didactic and epic, by twenty-five representative poets. For those whose knowledge of Persian poetry is limited to Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam* and Matthew Arnold's adaptation of Firdaussi's epic in Sohrab and Rustum, it is a rare introduction to a literature of colour and vitality. A golden age of poetry is covered; from Jami, the great classical poet of the ninth century, and Omar of the tenth, to Rumi, the mystic, who flourished in the thirteenth and the sweet lyricist Hafiz, who died in 1391.

Nevertheless some recent poems are included to shew the stream still flows, and that in Iqbal, whose death was as recent as sixteen years ago, Pakistan, with its Persian heritage, had a poet of world stature. The Rubaiyat is represented by 176 stanzas, but this limits the space available for poets of equal attainment and delight. Moreover, the preface, though it has style and felicity, is largely concerned with the translators and their translations, whereas a greater devotion to the development of the art in Persia would have been invaluable.

To link *Studies in Milton's Poetry* with Persian poetry may seem strange, but in many ways the Persian lyrics are closer to the main currents of our own poetry, and require less exposition in their earthiness than the soaring works of the great Latinist. Milton with his wealth of ancient and classical mythology is still, for so many, an unlocked treasury. But our last great epic poet set himself the task of reconciling the human pattern with the divine, and for those with the will and the humility, this book by an American scholar will come as a timely assistance and a key. It is not easy going, for erudition matches the necessity. The progress of the poet's vision is traced from *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso,* bracing its powers; through *Comus, Lycidas,* and *Samson Agonistes,* defining the conflict; to the epic realization of *Paradise Lost* and fulfilment in *Paradise Regained.*

The prosody of Milton, his imagery and his verbal music, are not the author's concern. But as a guide to the Homeric contest to which Milton dedicated his vast powers these studies in their penetration are beyond praise.

Two notes for our readers:—

Please encourage the advertisers in this number by asking for their books at the libraries and bookshops.

The Directory of Centres appeared in the July-September number, and will be repeated in our next issue.

Greenwood Prize Poem . . .

MILTON BLIND
MARGARET RHODES

The creeper curls like flame upon the wall,
And high above a smooth green sky outlines
The tendril trees, now scarfed with wisps of smoke;
The plump and comfortable sparrows come
Like dead leaves blown in gusts across the lawn,
And mouse-eyed on the open lattice, one
Rests with all autumn's sunlight on his wings.

Inside the room a log falls in the grate,
There is the turning of a leaf, and still
The cool young voice reading, that trips and stumbles,
The tongue faltering over the syllables
Of a strange language, blurred before her tears,
As her head drooped before the just rebuke
That custom never softened.
When there was only silence, silence that pressed
Against the emptiness left by her voice,
She turned towards the high chair by the fire
And saw her father's thin hand on his knee,
The fingers curled and still: and so at last
She raised her gaze to his unseeing eyes.
The closed lids made his whole face secret now,
And she, perceiving peace there like a mask
Left him asleep and tiptoed from the room.
The unforeseen escape
Was more than sun and wind upon her face
More than the light that comes dancing with dust
When shutters are unbarred and curtains drawn,
And in her youth she gave it permanence.

Deborah closed the door, and ran upstairs
With light feet followed by the stir of skirts,
Rosy with triumph; Mary's needle dropped
Unnoticed in her laughter; timid Anne
Looked up with eyes startled and wondering;
So Deborah laughed too, and thrust away
The prick of guilt that knew
How he would stir and wake, speaking her name,
And there would be no answer from the darkness . . .

Then turning, saw her mother at the door.
The child's voice buzzed like flies inside her head,
In her frustration anger tore at her,
And Deborah went crying to her room,
Youth turning with bruised fists from the stone wall.
The woman sighed, and went downstairs alone,
Troubled that in the acceptance of her world
She stumbled on the harshness of rebellion.
As she unlatched the door
Her husband stirred: "Is that you, Deborah?
The reading is not finished; come, sit down,
Embroidery can wait one little hour."
His fingers tapped impatience, and rebuke
Spilled over, till he heard the heavier step,
The sedate rustling of Elizabeth.

"Elizabeth, is the sun warm outside?
The child said there was sun upon the lawn,
And all day long our ragged speech has torn
Across the small autumn voices of birds
Who chatter of warm days and sun and shadow;
Let me walk in the sun."
"It is not easy for any one of us,"
She thought, "but least of all for him.
Yet the girls cry because they are afraid;
Even his Deborah, who knows his tempers
And is most like him, even Deborah
I heard cry out in bitterness of spirit."
Then as he passed the window, unaware
Of eyes that watched his going, his wife sighed:
"We cannot blame him; trees meant more to him
Than to our eyes, and clouds, and the bright sun,
Yet he has lost the light of moon and stars."
She turned away, and in unending dark
He walked alone under the dappled sunlight
Counting the stars of his own universe.
The air was still, and once a baby cried
From far away, but shrilly; a dog barked,
And upstairs there was Mary's little laugh
That fell across the garden happily.
A girl's laugh, and girls' voices; the man paused
Hearing them clearly at the open window,

Alert, distinguishing Anne's halting speech
And afterwards the voice of Deborah
Listless and dulled with tears.
All girls, for household tasks, and no tall son
To take his books, the leaves scarred black with words,
And pore upon them till the print became
A blurred and heavy thing; and call for light,
More light that should illumine what they meant,
Until the circle of the universe
Was opened up to his undazzled eyes.
No son to take his name, receive the learning
Of a long lifetime of devotion
And blinding study; his heel ground the stones,
Startling him with its sound.

The sharp click of the gate scattered his thoughts,
And the impenetrable mask of blindness fell
Like death upon his face, as he stood there.
His wife was coming towards him, and behind
A man's firm step, and Andrew Marvell's laugh;
He felt his friend's hand warm upon his own,
And the cool smell of fresh-dried lavender,
And they went in together to the fire.
There was no need then for Elizabeth;
Kneeling to mend the fire, she heard his voice
Not petulant now, or unconcerned, or scornful,
But intimate and alive with sudden interest,
And so she left them, and none called her back.

The elder man heard the accustomed voice,
Remembering the brilliant, living eyes,
The mockery of lips, and the calm brow,
And in his stunted world
Where always ageless voices came and went
And golden or brown hair never turned to grey,
He wondered if there would be change here too,
The eyes look out fireless and heavy-lidded
From deeper sockets, and he never know.
Before, there was a new world every day,
Buds swelled and broke to flower, and flowers fell,
Moons waxed and waned, suns rode across the sky
To set in flames, and that was not the end;
From earth and darkness came
Fresh seeds of life, new moons, and rising suns.
But men and women suffered the most change;
Sadness and happiness from day to day
Altered their faces, or the way they walked;
And all the time age made its robberies.
But now he knew that he was left behind
To walk apart, where others had no wrinkles,
And did not bend a little growing old,
And cheeks were always red, and ankles trim;
Because their voices, which alone remained,
Bore the years easily.
His friend's words intricately wove themselves
Between his thoughts, and drew him skilfully
Into a maze of light and leaves and colour,
Where orchards white and green under the sun
Let fall their fruits sun-ripened and windfallen
Upon the grass that slanted and was still.
The butterflies clung to those autumn flowers,
And gaudy velvet wings disturbed the green
Of vision's peace. And swallows came again
Immaculate in flight,
That should have sought their unmapped roadways South.

He sighed for one with such brave things to say
Of the eye's delight, and Andrew Marvell, hearing:
"At night we see the stars, and shapes of trees
Darker than the sky's darkness, and we lose
The thousand whispers that are yours; your ears
Keen to the falling of a leaf, must know
The tremor of the night under the hedge,
The shiver of feathers in among the leaves,
Mice stirring in the grasses,
And then the toneless, bare cry of the bat."
The friend consoled, and did not understand.
When he had gone, the other sat alone,
Ignorant of the hour, and whether dusk
Had sealed the world with shadows; in the room
No candle guttered, but he did not know
If the last sunlight moved across the wall
Or night had stolen in across his night.
He felt the book laid open on the table
As Deborah had left it, with her tears

Long dry upon the page,
And closed it carefully, leaning his hand
Against his cheek, and in the quietness
His mind turned over half-forgotten things.

He could remember evenings as a child
Like this, placid and breathless autumns
With the days turning softly towards night;
There was the same keen smell of bonfires, too,
And he had leant on tip-toe from the window
Watching the stars prick out across the sky,
While from the room his father's enchanted music
Crept out into the dark.
Such evenings had been hoarded in his mind
For solace at St. Paul's, and afterwards
At Cambridge, when his dazed eyes left his books
He could remember, long ago, such peace.
Cambridge . . . and then the theatres of London,
The girls, cheeks dusty with the bloom of pollen,
That met his elegant glances with bold eyes;
And days of leisure for his thoughts and friends.
Now, leaning back his head, he lived again
The years at Horton, when he left the world;
Week followed week unchecked,
Long days of discipline and preparation
And nights of study, fitting mind and spirit
Into that selfless, universal ego
Of a poet dedicated to his greatness.
He had forgotten now the life between;
Italy, and the first flush of his fame,
And then the years of struggle, the frustration
Of his high hopes, and last, irrevocably
The approaching darkness of noonday and of dawn:
And his task still before him in the night.

He stirred at last, calling for Deborah,
Calling for unseen tapers;
He could not see orchards like Andrew Marvell,
Or his wife's face, or see his daughters flower,
But to his eyes opened a universe
Where Satan towered in rebellion
Across the heavens that were void of stars,
God walked in Eden at the cool of the day;
And the poet, seeing the hosts of heaven and hell,
And Time spread out before him, could not rest.
Deborah came, and the voice of Elizabeth:
"Let the child go to bed, her eyes are tired,
And she will write to-morrow."
But Deborah knew that it must be to-night,
For in the flickering light those sightless eyes
Burned with a fever, and the eagerness
Of face and voice was not for earthly things.
Sometimes his voice had dropped into her dreams,
Calling her up to stumble to his room
Shivering in the night or bleak half-light,
And she had sat obedient on his bed
With her teeth chattering, as she watched the grease
Crawl down the candlestick,
And in the daytime she had left her food
To take up pens and paper, going to him
Who was consumed with fire, and could not eat
Until his words were saved oblivion.
To-night her eyelids were still puffed with tears,
And heavier than a burden; her pen wrote
With her mind tagging wearily behind
Dazed by the coloured shadows in the fire.

She had thought blindness was to fall from light,
Never to know the spring's white blossoming,
Or motion, or expression;
But as she wrote for him, whose world was drawn
Into those four walls' space, the corners filled
With shapes that moved in armour, with the eyes
Of devils and of cherubs, the bright hair
That has the sun's light in it; and above
The ceiling was more vast than boundless skies,
Having no fixed horizon, only space
Where mountains were uprooted from a world
And tossed like toys for angels' awful war.

Then Deborah knew that pity was a thing
For those with earthly sight,
Who had not found the inner eye's perfection:
And at the last she darkly understood
That in his blindness he had lighted suns
Hidden from her, who had pitied him, and seen
Only the dust that lay upon the table,
Only a leaf; and he had lighted suns.

DENT

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PREMIUM COMPETITION: REPORT
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There was never any doubt in the mind of the adjudicator: "Valley of Dry Bones" is easily the best of the entries, and it is awarded the prize with congratulations to the author, Mrs. Frances Holland.

Because of the winning poem's length it has been decided to hold over until the next number our announcement of the award in the very generous and important Albert Ralph Korn Poetry Competition. Limitations of space have made this necessary, and readers will appreciate the wisdom of the postponement when the announcement is made.

Honorable mention among the Premium entries: "The Comet" by Margaret Lees, (Bowdon, Cheshire), and "Our Apple Tree Blossoms" by Pamela Melnikoff, (Edgware, Middlesex).

VALLEY OF DRY BONES

FRANCES HOLLAND

Dry bones
In the valley,
Dry as the stones
In the drought of the water-course.

The wind of the Lord
Blowing between the bones,
Sighing and singing of life.
Said one to another,
"Are we called to life again?"
Then answered bone to bone
Renouncing, "Refuse it, refuse — "

And to the wind of God
Thighbone to shinbone said
"We are the bones of soldiers;
We have marched too far already
From the tents of our women,
The bells of our dancing girls.
Weary are we of the clash, dry crash of armour
Along the desert routes;
Give us no more long roads, up-hill and stony.
Too long will be the re-tracing
Of the old steps we stumbled,
And to go forward hopeless will be hard
And all too long —
Leave us to lie in peace."

And the shoulder blades
"We are the bones of slaves;
We have trudged too far already
From the roofs of our fathers and children,
From the cooking-pots and the games.
The burdens we bore sat heavily
Galling and twisting,
Gladly we cast them off —
Give us no more.
Leave us to lie in peace."

And the dry skulls said
"Our eyes burned in their holes,
Our lips were parched beyond singing, our tongues beyond speech,
And Death came as the kiss of a gentle lover,
A cup of wine brimful in the hand of a friend."

And still the wind of God
Blew through the sighing bones
"Servants and soldiers, rise — "

And they
Stirring together, said
"Death had a soft embrace;
The Darkness of Death was fair after the brightness of mirage;
The waters of Death were sweet after the ovens of sand;
We have drunk deep of death,
We sleep and are at peace."

God in the wind said "Stand!
Stand upright on your feet!
Lie no more in the arid arms of death,
But in My Hand
Stand!"

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THE ALBERT RALPH KORN ESSAY AWARD

Again The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing that through the generosity of Mr. Albert Ralph Korn, of New York, a deep lover of poetry and a distinguished American, a new and substantial annual Award is offered to Members in any part of the world.

A prize of Twenty Pounds will be given for the best short essay on "Clarity versus Obscurity in Poetry". It must be original, previously unpublished, and not longer than 1,500 words.

The judges will be appointed by The Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review*. The manuscript must be typewritten and sent anonymously, with the author's name and address accompanying it in a sealed envelope. No MSS can be returned. Closing date for the award is 30th June, 1955.

The outer envelope must be addressed: "Albert Ralph Korn Award, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1., England."

THE HOWARD PARSONS SONNET COMPETITION FOR 1954

The Poetry Society has the pleasure of announcing a new Competition to succeed the competition in memory of Lord Alfred Douglas for a sonnet Shakespearian or, for this once, Petrarchan, upon any subject.

The prize of Eight Guineas which is generously offered by Mr. Howard Parsons, may be divided at the discretion of the adjudicator. The winning poem or poems will be published with the awards in *The Poetry Review*. Competitors must retain copies of their poems as these cannot be returned. The sonnets should bear a definite title and not merely be marked "Sonnet". Not more than two sonnets may be submitted by each competitor by 30th June, 1955. Address "Sonnet Competition", The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Entries should bear names and addresses of competitors. No previously published poem may be entered.

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITION FOR 1954

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of £20 as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed "The Greenwood Prize", 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editorial Board, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*. Closing date is 31st August, 1955.

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION

The above competition continues as before with the total entrance fees as prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired. (See Rule 3).
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed "Premium Competition", *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize twice will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for the next Premium Competition will be 1st December, 1954.

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MACMILLAN

POET'S PLEASURE

NEWS FROM THE CENTRES

By the Editorial Staff

"Pen pals in Poetry". What a happy idea! — and it has become a reality in at least one Centre overseas, or something very like it. From St. Petersburg, Florida, the President, Mrs. Helen T. D. Robinson, writes that her sister, Eva A. Robinson is "hostess-director" of a scheme through which some members of the St. Petersburg Centre meet weekly while in town and "shut-ins" write and receive letters. "Shut-ins" at other Centres, especially here in Britain, please note.

Many of our Centres must have members who, through invalidism or distance, are unable to attend the meetings. Correspondence is mailed from our London headquarters to Centres in distant farmost parts of the country, and to members many miles from such places as Ipswich, Nottingham, Dumfries, and Belfast. And alas, there are other times when a poet or a friend of poetry is house-bound in the same town or city where a prosperous and active Centre exists. We suggest that here is a subject ripe for discussion at each Centre's next business-meeting.

ST. PETERSBURG (U.S.A.)

Meanwhile, let us add to the news from this Florida Centre that Mrs. Mary O'Connor, one-time operatic vocalist, artist, and author, has succeeded in getting "National Poetry Day" proclaimed by the Governors of the majority of forty-eight States in America. Mrs. O'Connor, one of the aforesaid "shut-ins" because of an accident fifteen years ago, which left her bedfast, continues to write, paint, and win prizes. "Being paralysed from the neck down," she says, "is no reason for being paralysed from the neck up."

Other members referred to in the latest report from Mrs. Robinson as belonging to the same category as Mrs. O'Connor are Mrs. Laura Bedell and Miss Hilda Ridley, both of Canada, who are active in "absentia"; Mrs. Gertrude S. Howard and Mrs. S. Sandt, both vice-presidents. The latest minutes of the Centre's activities include a reference to the award (twenty-five dollars) by the magazine *Kaleidograph* to Mrs. Howard for her poem "To Those Who Make the Peace". Mrs. Helen T. D. Robinson, equally successful with her latest poetry, invites enquiries at 815 Jackson Street, North St. Petersburg, Florida.

BOSTON (U.S.A.)

The Shakespeare Players Club of Boston were guests of this Centre in April, and the evening proved really memorable. Scenes from *Alice in Wonderland*, given under the direction of Mrs. Muriel Maclachlan, were acted delightfully, each part being played with such sympathy that, as the Centre secretary's report says, "we were all back in England, thanks to Alice especially." Who undertook the part of Alice is not told in the report, but "born in England she had kept her childhood charm. We were amazed to find her on this side of the Atlantic." Mrs. Maclachlan also read poems by Lewis Carroll. Miss Bigelow is the Centre secretary, 163 Eliot Street, Milton 87, Massachusetts.

NORTHERN IRELAND

"What's Past is Prologue," said Shakespeare, and the prologue to the immediate future of the Centre has been so excellent that every member is looking forward with great eagerness to the session which began the other day and concludes in April, 1955.

For the benefit of other programme-builders who like to see what the Centres are doing elsewhere, we summarize the eight monthly meetings at Belfast, all of which are held in the Kensington Hotel, 22 College Square. (Miss Haddock's address as Centre secretary is 18 Ashley Gardens).

For 20th September a recital, "Irish Serenade" was arranged by Mrs. H. V. Taggart. This will be followed on 18th October by a talk on Dylan Thomas (Mr. R. C. Stephens, M.A.). A reading of Gilbert Murray's translation of *Hippolytus* by Euripides (producer

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THE POETRY SOCIETY

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I desire to be enrolled as a member; entrance fee and first annual subscription (22/6d.) enclosed herewith.

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Helen Shaw) will be given on 15th November, and the year ends on 6th December with "Poems of Remembrance", a recital arranged by Miss Haddock. "An Anthology of Humour" is a recital arranged for 17th January by Miss Elizabeth Lindsay, B.A., and to the junior members the February (21st) meeting is to be devoted. Mrs. Donaldson will talk on Robert Burns on 21st March, and the season closes with Mr. Lerner's lecture on T. S. Eliot and his plays. An impressive list: and the Belfast Centre deserves the success that is bound to attend it.

WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE

Mr. Wilfrid Gibson, who contributes a poem to this number of *The Poetry Review*, is President of the Centre. The doings at the Centre since its last report have been full of interest, even though what was meant to be a "garden meeting" in May had to be held indoors — at the home of the Secretary, Mrs. Elsie M. Gittens, 28 Oatlands Drive, Weybridge. Readings from Shelley, Coleridge, Matthew Arnold, T. E. Brown, Robert Frost, D. H. Lawrence, and V. Sackville-West made a feast.

In June Mr. Kenneth Lillington gave a talk on A. E. Housman. Mr. Lillington may, with justice, be spoken of as a promising young playwright: his play, *The Devil's Grandson*, is to be published shortly by Heineman. William Barnes, the Dorset poet, was the subject of Mr. Brian Squire's talk in July, and the readers who "tried to struggle a little with the charming Dorsetshire accent" were Ruth Irving, Julie Simpson, Phyllis Williamson, John and Elsie Gittens, and Mr. Squire himself. The season closed in August with a talk on "The Classical Tennyson", from the notes of Mr. Cecil Willson, who was unable to attend, read by Mr. John Gittens. A volume of Tennyson's suppressed poems was introduced, and so was a B.B.C. broadcast of the great poet's voice reading "The Northern Farmer" on gramophone cylinders preserved by his grandson.

SUFFOLK

Sir Charles Tennyson, to whom our Walton and Weybridge report refers, gave a reading of his grandfather's poems at the July meeting of this Centre. The reading was entitled "Tennyson, Some Unfamiliar Poems", and they included "The Kraken", published when the poet was only twenty-one, "Lisette", "The Sailor Boy", "The Northern Cobbler", "Hymn to the Sun", etc. "Next time", writes the Hon Secretary, "we hope it will be 'Some Familiar Poems'."

This Centre has made a delightful habit of holding its meetings in various places, and Sir Charles Tennyson read in the ballroom of Melton Grange, near Woodbridge. Earlier meetings were held in the Oriental Cafe, Ipswich, at Belstead House, near Ipswich, at the Butt and Oyster, Pin Mill, and at Stoke Priory, Stoke-by-Nayland. A Centre to be envied — and congratulated.

In March Mr. James Turner read extracts from his book, *The Hollow Vale*. The following month the members heard Miss Roberta Shuttleworth read and talk on "Mystical Poems", and her own poetry also. The speaker in May was Mr. Ronald Bottrall, M.A., who recently won an Italian prize of £450 for a MS. of poems and who frequently broadcasts on the Third Programme. Included in the reading of his own work was one on "Peace" — "Peace is the stirlessness of a nesting bird".

The Suffolk Centre has been asked to contribute towards a fund to commemorate the bi-centenary of George Crabbe, the county's own poet. Miss Kay Turner, the Hon. Secretary, has moved to a new address: 1 Willoughby Road, Ipswich.

POETS' PROGRESS

Report on the Forty-fifth Annual General Business Meeting of The Poetry Society, held at 33 Portman Square on 26th May, 1954:

The President opened the Meeting, welcoming Members and receiving apologies for absence from Miss Margaret Rawlings, Mr. Kennedy Williamson and Dr. Leigh Henry.

The Hon. Treasurer read the Balance Sheet and the Income and Expenditure Account for 1953, and said: "The net result is more pleasing than any we have had during recent

"Where there is no vision the people perish"

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The Gen. Sec., The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, W.1.

years." The deficit for 1952 was £534: for 1953 there was a surplus of £339 13s. 10d. This has brought the Accumulated Fund from £2,254 to £2,594. "These figures indicate the long way back to a position of more assured financial stability."

New members enrolled during the year were 229. A high proportion of the loss of others through resignation or failure to renew their subscriptions was caused by financial stringency.

The Hon. Treasurer went on to speak of Auditions — "always a pleasure, and the figures speak for themselves." In 1952 the income from them was £3,629 and in 1953 it was £3,897. The donations given for special prizes to poet-members offered through *The Poetry Review* was higher than it has ever been, and, turning to the Society's publications, a welcome increase in the sales of *The Poetry Review* was noted.

In concluding his Report the Hon. Treasurer said — and the President echoed him later on: "It is my duty and pleasure to pay tribute to Miss Cracroft and her staff for the cheerful and unfailing help I have always received under circumstances which have been, on occasion, harrassing and unhappy." He also thanked the Auditors, Messrs. Godwin and Taylor, and, from the financial angle, paid tribute to the General Council and the Executive Committee. "Individual members, by unselfish, extended hard work, and many by personal donations, have materially contributed to the credit result."

Finally, the Hon. Treasurer commented on "the endeavours of your President throughout the year. You are all aware of the many efforts he has made to obtain members and funds. They deserved a far greater degree of success than they attained, but in the event they were certainly worth while."

Mr. Robert Armstrong moved the adoption of the Report and Balance Sheet, and he was seconded by Mr. Charles Doran. The motion was carried unanimously, with applause, and so was the Hon. Treasurer's formal motion that the Auditors be reappointed for 1954.

The President then gave his address. He began by confirming the Hon. Treasurer's report — The Poetry Society is "in a happier position than has been experienced in most members' memories." He promised that in the near future the Library at 33 Portman Square would be overhauled, recatalogued and reclassified, and that the *look* of the Society's headquarters will shortly be so improved "that old members may regain their sense of quiet grace and dignity as they pass over the threshold, and that newcomers given an impression of comfort and authority at the same time — something nearly unique in this sick old London."

Serious difficulties were solved during the year so successfully that there is a moral: "Vote and revote on to our Councils a legal expert and a revenue expert!" . . . The Society now has more than a score of Centres or Groups, at home and abroad. It is closely in touch with the Poetry Society of America, and, through Sir Eugen Millington-Drake, with various cultural movements on the continent, where this "Ambassador of The Poetry Society" now resides.

In conclusion, after paying tribute to The Editorial Board and to Mr. John Graddon for the year's work as Hon. Treasurer and for *The Voice of Youth,* he thanked various members, notably Mrs. Adamson, Mr. Robert Armstrong and Mr. Alun Llewellyn, for their special work during the year, and exclaimed: "What a sight it is for worried eyes to see a surplus in the Balance Sheet at last!" Speaking of his Presidency and hinting that such a term of office cannot last for ever for one man, Mr. Moult said that it had been "a great joy to him these past two years."

The members of the Readings Sub-committee were warmly thanked for their untiring work over the past year by Mr. Charles Doran. And Mr. W. Kean Seymour moved a vote of thanks to the ladies who are our Examiners (for their names see April-June number, page 123), and to all others associated with the Society's auditions — both motions being enthusiastically received. The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the President which was carried with acclamation.